# Reflections on Economic Interests in Thatcherite Discourse and British Foreign Policy towards the Gulf Co-operation Council States: a Constructivist Analysis

**A Thesis submitted to the**
**Department of Political Science and International Studies**
**of the University of Birmingham**
**for the Degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy in International Studies**

**By Shahin Malik**

**The University of Birmingham**
**27 September 2002**

# Contents

## Synopsis

This thesis conducts a constructivist analysis of Thatcherite policy in order to determine the role played by material economic interests in the formation of British foreign policy towards the member States of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC). In accordance with constructivist principles Thatcherism is viewed ideationally as a belief system based upon notions of economics and interests and the hypothesis states that this created a framework for approaching foreign policy, and that the nature of British foreign policy towards the GCC States during the Thatcher era was constructed by the positivist discourse of economic interests. In order to test the hypothesis, and drawing on extensive primary sources, the analysis of Thatcherite discourse is based upon two overarching perspectives, the British Government's perceptions of the economic importance of the GCC States, concentrating on oil and Britain's exports to the region, and the Government's response to the perceived threats to its economic interests, examining the consequences of the Iranian Revolution, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq War and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The thesis therefore takes as its basis the constructivist principle that both ideational and material structures have a role to play in influencing foreign policy.

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank Professor Stuart Croft for his invaluable supervision, help and guidance throughout my research. Not only has he, on many occasions, saved me from pitfalls but he has remained committed to encouraging me to complete. This thesis would not have been possible without his persistence.

I would also like to thank Fiona Wells who has been there to help me at the most crucial stages of the thesis by reading through the text to ensure its clarity.

In addition Professor Iwan Morgan, as my new Head of Department, has been very sensitive to my need to complete the thesis and has kindly allowed me time off my normal duties during the final stages.

## Chapter 1: Methodology, Literature survey and Establishing Parameters

### Introduction

This thesis aims to use the constructivist approach to determine the extent to which material economic interests in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) States were perceived by decision makers as shaping British foreign policy in the Persian Gulf region during the period 1979-1991.[1] The key events which mark the beginning of the analytical period are the Iranian Revolution, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the election of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister of Great Britain, all of which occurred in 1979. Similarly the end of the period is denoted by the British involvement in the Gulf Crisis following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. The general period of the thesis is that of the "Thatcher era", however, for the sake of completeness the analysis continues up to the point when Iraq is forcibly removed from Kuwait.

At present there is no definitive analysis of the Thatcher Administration's (1979-1990) record in the Persian Gulf. Most studies of relevance are US orientated, and fail to recognise the role played by Britain in the region's dynamics during this period.[2] Studies conducted in Britain further demonstrate that there is a serious lack of literature in this field. Even Sir Richard Scott's report on the 'arms to Iraq' affair is quantitatively different from the central aims of this thesis, as his detailed investigation, which centred on Whitehall oversight and cover-up, falls short of analysing the British Government's foreign policy objectives in the Persian Gulf.[3] Likewise, Davina Miller's *Export or Die* is concerned mainly with the internal dynamics of the Thatcher Government's attempts to export defence equipment to both Iran and Iraq.[4] Although the question of defence exports is a central issue in this thesis, it is placed within the wider context of British foreign policy objectives in the GCC States. This study is different from any prior analysis, as there are no other relevant studies whose central aims are an analysis of the Thatcher Government's foreign policy objectives in the GCC States, particularly not in terms of assessing the discourse.

The thesis adopts Social Constructivism as its theoretical approach because it highlights the importance of ideas and discourse in shaping policy. An analysis of the

discourse of the Thatcher era reveals an emphasis on the importance of economic interests as influencing the formation of UK policy towards the GCC States. Thatcherite discourse was constituted by economic emphasis and imagery and, as a consequence, structured ideas about the formation of British policy in the Gulf. This thesis, therefore, focuses specifically on Thatcherite discourse and draws on it to reach its conclusions. The discourse is identified in the research material, which includes statements by leading politicians, information gained through interviews with specific officials and a reading of other key primary documents such as the House of Commons Official Record (Hansard), numerous relevant Select Committee Reports and other secondary and primary sources. In order to explain the importance of discourse and ideas in creating impressions it is necessary to provide theoretical justification that not only endorses the economic determinism prevalent in the thesis but also provides a firm basis in International Relations (IR) theory.

**Thesis Structure**

*Chapter One*

In this initial chapter, a general survey of IR theory will be conducted in order to establish a firm theoretical basis for the use of discourse, language and ideas in creating perceptions of policy. This section highlights the limitations of the leading rationalist theories in successfully explaining the connections between language, discourse and any understanding of policy, and adopts constructivism as the theoretical basis of the thesis. In highlighting the central arguments at the heart of the constructivist project it demonstrates that there are elements of this approach that allow analyses to go beyond meta-theoretic discussion in the post-positivist era to conducting case study enquiry. It further shows that discourse and ideas are socially constructed elements that in turn encourage the formation of identities which subsequently influence foreign policy. For constructivists, the discourse and ideas prevalent in a particular era must be responsible for the formation of perceptions of policy. This section ends with a statement of the hypothesis put forward as a basis for the thesis.

The relevance of Thatcherism is analysed in the next section in the context of the ideational construct of decline in British economic and global power. However,

Thatcherism propounded a vision of a profoundly challenging external environment, arising from the new problems which were emerging in the 1980s, leading inexorably to Britain having to reconsider its foreign policy options and ultimately begin playing a more prominent world-wide role, not least in the Persian Gulf.

Chapter 1's third section begins by setting parameters around the Persian Gulf, narrowing the region to Britain's relations with the GCC States. Britain's preoccupation with these States is analysed in light of its perceived economic interests in the region, and the factors which dominate the discourse, namely *oil, markets and finance*. The section then examines the nature of the constructed threats to the region, and Britain's response to them. These are sub-divided into *internal* and *external* threats. Threats perceived from the revolutionary regime in Iran and conflict within the region is seen as internal, while external focus on the perceived Soviet encroachment into the Persian Gulf and its encirclement of the area.

The fourth section will provide a brief introduction to the British response to the above threats, and the fifth section will give an account of the sources approached and used to complete the case study, emphasising discourse. Finally, the conclusion to this chapter will combine the various elements and examine the connection between them.

*Chapter 2*

Chapter 2 analyses British foreign policy towards the GCC States during the years 1979-1988, a timeframe which encompasses crucial events, from the election of Mrs. Thatcher in 1979, the Iranian Revolution of 1979, and the subsequent onset of the Iran/Iraq war in 1980, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979) to the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1988 and the formal ceasefire in the Iran/Iraq war.

Government discourse increasingly emphasised rising export levels to alleviate some of the economic problems of the day, particularly in the manufacturing sectors. The defence industry was seen as one area which had largely remained insulated from the problems affecting manufacturing industry as a whole. The strong stance on defence, therefore, included an active policy on encouraging the export of defence equipment to the GCC States which were once again seen as natural British markets given historical, political, diplomatic and military ties. The analysis of the Gulf markets revolves around a

representative sample, considering Oman, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. All GCC States were spending heavily on procuring defence equipment and Britain stood to gain considerably. Indeed, as the chapter highlights, securing the *Al Yamamah* contract, for instance, ensured that Britain retained a considerable degree of influence in Saudi defence considerations.

The Iranian Revolution of 1979, the possibility of disruption to oil and trade routes through the Straits of Hormuz in light of the onset of conflict between Iran and Iraq and the consequences of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan were presented as a rationale for a British military presence. British discourse focussed on the possibility of the expansion of "fundamentalist" fervour from Iran to other GCC States, perceived to be threatening to British markets and other interests in the region. The discourse was also filled by fears that the Iran-Iraq war might spread conflict to the moderate pro-Western Gulf States. Finally, the discourse also stressed that Soviet invasion of Afghanistan threatened the Persian Gulf, illustrating a perceived expansion of the Soviet threat.

These factors form the basis upon which the chapter then considers the British response. In view of the perceived strategic importance of the region for Britain coupled with the perceptions of threats, the Government could not, if it was to be consistent with its own assumptions, have considered any option but to take steps to safeguard its interests in the GCC States. The final section provides an analysis of Britain's military presence in the Persian Gulf, its support for the US Rapid Deployment Force, its naval deployments (the Armilla Patrol), the deployment of Naval Task Groups, conducting military exercises in the region, the provision of military assistance to the GCC States, and secondments of British military personnel.

*Chapter 3*

Chapter 3 extends the analysis up to July 1990 and in the same fashion as chapter 2 draws upon Thatcherite discourse to highlight firstly Britain's economic interests, and secondly the changes which took place during this period. The ceasefire between Iran and Iraq, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the improvement in relations between Britain and the Soviet Union were taken as evidence upon which changes in British threat perceptions vis-à-vis the Persian Gulf had taken place. Although the effects of the then

Soviet President's (Mikhail Gorbachev) "new thinking" in foreign policy may have been predominantly European in focus, changes in Soviet attitudes towards the West were seen to have global implications, with the Gulf being amongst the first regions to be affected. Improvement in East West relations continued following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and in view of the Soviet Union's willingness to co-operate with regard to bringing the Iran-Iraq war to an end. Consequently, British threat perceptions were altered, and the Government became no longer insistent on maintaining the full range of naval vessels assigned to the Armilla Patrol.

British threat perceptions vis-à-vis the Persian Gulf now became centred on the threat of weapons of mass destruction. There is evidence that the British Government was fully aware of the use by Iraq, for instance, of chemical weapons against both Iranian forces as well as its own Kurdish population. The analysis in this chapter, therefore, establishes the basis for a consideration (in chapter 4) of the Government's active participation in establishing the conditions imposed on Iraq by Section C of Security Council Resolution 687 (see Appendix 8).

*Chapter 4*

British discourse shaping involvement in the 1990/91 Gulf War is analysed in chapter 4. As the chapter shows, the discourse highlighted the Government's belief that it needed to develop an unambiguous commitment towards Iraq's unconditional withdrawal with a view to stabilising an often-faltering international coalition thereby giving the impression that Britain was able to offer the United invaluable diplomatic support. The importance that Britain attached to the stability of the Persian Gulf region is shown in this chapter's detailed analysis of the British military contribution to the coalition effort, which was second only to the United States. A detailed analysis of Operation Granby, therefore, demonstrates the extent to which the British Government enhanced its military presence in the region.

The British government's threat perceptions are also analysed here and the discourse shows that the Government believed that even following the cessation of hostilities steps would need to be taken to ensure that a remilitarised Iraq would not pose a threat to the GCC States. The role played by Britain in the establishment of the United

Nations Special Commission set up to dismantle Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and to verify that these programmes were not re-constituted showed that the government continued to remain concerned about the stability of the region long after the war ended.

The chapter then provides further evidence to support the premise that the discourse of the era was dominated by an economic image and shows that, despite US pronouncements that arms to the region needed to be restricted, the War enabled Britain to demonstrate its military equipment to an already crucial defence market. This directly benefited the British defence industry since the Gulf States, fearing for their security, clamoured to develop and reconstruct their own defence systems.

## Section 1: International Relations Theory: the limits of Rationalism

The intention here is not to conduct a detailed examination of the rich array of theories in International Relations (IR), but rather to explain why Social Constructivism has been adopted as a lens for the study. International Relations as a discipline has been the subject of a large number of debates between proponents of its various paradigms, each of which highlight both the discipline's heritage and its failure to find common ground.[5] Though characterising the *great debates* in IR is complicated, a parsimonious account reveals disciplinary movement. The first debate, focusing, amongst other factors, on the nature of man, raged between the Realists who were concerned with seeing the world as it was and the Utopianists who wished for war to be abolished.[6] Classical Realism has traditionally been seen by many to provide analysts with a most lucid interpretation of international events. Its focus on the power politics feature of humans boasts, as Buzan claims, 'a long intellectual pedigree going back to Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes and Rousseau'.[7] Doyle and Ikenberry provide a useful summary of core realist principles: 'realists hold in varying degrees that the best description of world politics is a state of war - not a continuous war or constant war but the constant possibility of war among all states'. They further specify that 'Politics is gripped by a state of war because the nature of humanity or the character of states or the structure of international order (or all three together) allows wars to occur. This possibility of war requires that states follow *realpolitik*: be self interested, prepare for war, and calculate relative balances of power'.[8]

Realists further argue that all individuals must 'accept the national interest as an ideal, as the one true guide to the formulation of the public policy of states ... [and] failing to follow the national interest ... is a prescription for national disaster'.[9] In transposing notions of human selfishness and self-interest to states in the international system, Morgenthau succeeded in highlighting the centrality of the state. This also had the effect of imposing on the state a 'unitary' image which relegated sub-state actors, namely individuals and other domestic processes such as economics.[10]

It is this preoccupation with state-centrality, its relegation of domestic processes, its central emphasis on human nature, and its inability to analyse the role of ideas in the construction of identities and interests that places severe limitations on classical realism as a basis upon which to organise this thesis. Morgenthau saw international politics as a 'struggle for power', a notion further developed by other Realists such as Stausz-Hupe who also saw the conduct of international relations as a search for power and further conceptualised history as being dominated by 'several states locked in deadly conflict, all desiring the augmentation or preservation of their power'.[11] Furthermore Grieco argues that 'for realist theory the key result of the recognition by states of the possibility that force [may] be used against them is that they have security as their principal interest'.[12] Realism therefore fails adequately to explain foreign policy processes because its conception of the 'national interest' based almost entirely on notions of sovereignty, security and the struggle for power in an anarchic international system, is far too narrow.[13] Therefore, it is necessary to proceed further.

Terriff et al have stressed that the second 'Great Debate' arising in the 1960s 'threatened to pull the discipline apart'. In this debate Bull and Northedge stressed an 'understanding of history' whereas their opponents, Kaplan and Rosenau 'stressed the need to develop a scientific (behaviouralist) approach focused on quantification'.[14] During and following this debate state-centric ideas came under sustained pressure, firstly because the behaviouralists, particularly in the US, attempted to provide a direct alternative to international relations theories based upon a scientific and quantifiable study. This 'scientific' approach, however, failed to replace what Halliday referred to as 'traditional IR' and the state remained at the centre of focus. One important contribution of the behaviouralist era was that its demise resulted in the emergence of a number of new sub-

fields within international relations in the 1970s; both Foreign Policy Analysis and International Political Economy were to achieve a permanent place and subsequently challenge the dominance of realism.[15]

The study of British foreign policy also experienced the effects of debate. In describing the various approaches used to analyse British foreign policy, Steve Smith and Michael Smith referred to the challenge to state-centric ideas as traditionalist versus transformationalist. The traditional view argued for continuity in international relations in that it remained centred on a competition for power between sovereign states.[16] The transformationalists on the other hand argued for the existence of a 'much broader and more diverse reality which encompasse[d] a host of participants, issues and interactions, affecting and constraining states'[17] and that foreign policy should be seen 'in terms of government attempts to control and manage a wide range of economic and other issues in a setting where states were joined and challenged by other actors and where boundaries between domestic and international politics were distinctly fuzzy.'[18]

Challenges to realist dominance continued unabated during the 1970s as academics like Robert Keohane sought to establish alternatives to classical realism. His work on transnationalism, multiple access channels and complex interdependence expanded theoretical pluralism considerably and it appeared for a while that the realist pedestal was finally being rocked.[19] Keohane's work highlighted that interdependence was characterised by interactions which involved states but importantly also non-state actors. States were no longer insulated from either each other or the international system and this openness combined with interdependence to impose severe limitations on their ability to act autonomously.[20] Referred to as 'complex interdependence' these widening interactions were bringing about a qualitative change in international relations that was clearly non-state centric in nature.[21]

Despite the challenges to the state-centric ideas of realism, Waltz's influential study, *Theory of International Politics*, written at the time of the new outbreak of cold war between the USA and USSR propelled the state back into the centre. Where economic and social issues had been gaining ground as explanations for foreign policy behaviour, military and political tensions once again re-emerged. Despite these tensions, however, the foundations

of debate had been securely fixed and new more pluralistic sub-fields of international relations emerged to challenge the state as central actor.

The period since the 1970s has been dominated by a number of additional debates, of which Terriff et al provide a useful summary, beginning with Keohane's response to Kenneth Waltz's Herculean attempt to reconstitute classical realism and establish neo-realism as IR orthodoxy. The second debate 'includes the structuralists in what Michael Banks has called the inter-paradigm debate; and the third includes the post-positivists' and is, according to Yosef Lapid 'a discourse about the nature of analytical frameworks (positivism against post-positivism)'.[22]

The debate between the neo-realists and the neo-liberal institutionalists continues to be of major concern for the discipline. The convergence between these two theories - the so-called neo-neo synthesis - is ultimately based upon both paradigms seeking to 'apply the logic of rationalist economic theory to international relations' even though they reach 'radically different conclusions about the potential for international co-operation' under conditions of anarchy.[23] The terms of this debate are dealt with elsewhere but a brief account of some central elements may be useful since later sections highlight the very different nature of social constructivist enquiry.

In *Theory of International Politics* Waltz presents his own uncompromising image of the international system in the form of neorealist theory. As Hollis and Smith state, neo-realism 'insists on explaining the behaviour of states solely on the level of the international system' and that there is 'to be no appeal to the intentions or capabilities of states, or to the ...nature of their leaders'.[24] It is in this context that Waltz's preoccupation with systemic anarchy needs to be understood in that, since the international system lacks a central authority, states are primarily interested in their own survival.

Waltz was also adamant in specifying that his theory was not 'reductionist' as it was not concerned with explaining 'the whole by analysing the attributes and interactions of the parts'[25], and was therefore different from much of the literature at the time, which was failing to identify 'a set of causes that operate[d] at the systemic level and which [could] not be unearthed by looking at the attributes and interactions of the parts'.[26] In *Theory of International Politics* Waltz used the term "structure" to specify the way in

which the units in a system were arranged by arguing that structures could be either hierarchical (as in domestic political systems) or anarchical (as in the international political system).[27] Furthermore Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff stated that since neo-realism has as its focus the international system, it is the structure of the international system that

> shapes the political relationships that take place among its members. For structural realism [as it is sometimes referred to] international politics is more than the summation of the foreign policies of states and the external balance of other actors in the system. Thus Waltz argues for a neorealist approach based on patterned relationships among actors in a system that is anarchical ...[28]

This represents a very brief summary of core neorealist principles which must be placed in the context of the debate between neo-realism and neo-liberal institutionalism. Central to this debate was Robert Keohane who, by repositioning himself to neo-liberal institutionalism, moved away from his previous concern with interdependence and transnational relations. The acceptance by neo-liberal institutionalists that the international system is indeed anarchic because there is no authority over and above states vindicates to some extent Waltz's position in highlighting anarchy as an ordering principle. However, despite this acceptance, neo-liberal institutionalists have concerned themselves with analysing the extent of co-operation possible under conditions of anarchy and the conclusions that the two sides reach are radically different. Neo-realists claim that under anarchy conflict and the struggle for power are enduring characteristics of international politics, and that because of this 'co-operation between states is at best precarious and at worst non-existent'.[29]

Even though neo-liberal institutionalists emphasise the importance of anarchy and agree that achieving co-operation is difficult in international relations, they argue that 'world politics is not a homogenous state of war: co-operation varies among issues and over time'. Axelrod and Keohane, for instance, state that

> To say that world politics is anarchic does not imply that it entirely lacks organisation. Relationships among actors may be carefully structured in some issue areas, even though they remain loose in others. Likewise, some issues may be closely linked through the operation of institutions while the boundaries of other issues, as well as the norms and principles to be followed, are subject to dispute. Anarchy, defined as lack of common government, remains a constant; but the degree to which interactions are structured, and the means by which they are structured, vary.[30]

Another important work that highlights the nature of this debate is David Baldwin's edited collection *Neo-realism and neo-liberalism: the contemporary debate* published in 1993, where, apart from setting out the focal points of the debate, a number of neo-liberal institutionalists expressed their viewpoints over the question of co-operation under conditions of anarchy. Axelrod and Keohane emphasise the importance of anarchy defined as the absence of government but argue that this 'constant feature of world politics permits a variety of patterns of interaction among states'.[31] Arthur Stein, on the other hand, 'develops a conceptualisation of regimes as serving to circumscribe national behaviour and thus shape international interactions'.[32] Charles Lipson admits that co-operation is a fragile enterprise but claims that 'rule-guided and norm-governed arrangements are far more common' than neo-realist notions of anarchy would suggest.[33] Finally, Helen Milner investigates the concept of anarchy in the realist tradition and concludes that the international system is largely a 'chaotic arena of war of all against all'. She then questions whether 'chaos, lack of order, and constant threat' are really what scholars mean by the anarchic system and argues that there are 'persistent elements of order in international politics'.[34]

This brief analysis then represents the first part of Yosef Lapid's "third debate", and the analysis of Social Constructivism below will draw on some of the elements highlighted here in order to establish why neither of these neo-paradigms has been adopted as a basis for this thesis.

Michael Banks' inter-paradigm debate constitutes the second element of the "third debate" in IR and it is beyond the remit of this thesis to analyse this in any great detail. However, to summarise: Banks argues that there are three overarching paradigms - realism (including its classical and neo versions), pluralism (which embodies variants of liberalism), and structuralism (which includes analysts who focus on socio-economic structures as explanations for IR). The first two aspects of this inter-paradigm debate have been dealt with above but it remains necessary to explain why structuralist theories were rejected as a possible theoretical basis for the thesis.

Traditionally Marxism had not been central to the debates in International Relations and it was not until at least the 1970s that Marxist analysis was put forward as

an alternative IR theory. Ole Waever uses the level of analysis problem to explain the distinction between each of the paradigms:

> the state-as-actor for realism, the many non-state (e.g. firms), sub-state (e.g. bureaucracies), supra-state (e.g. regimes) and trans-state (e.g. transnational bureaucracies) actors for liberalism, and finally the system for neo-marxists. He goes on to state that it was this logic that led many in Britain to use the term "pluralism" for the liberal strand and 'structuralism' for the Marxist. Pluralism because of the many actors ... and structuralism because the whole system is much more organised and ordered according to the Marxist, than according to the other two.[35]

The structuralist approaches share certain key principles which are essentially based on economic relations within and among states. This emphasis on economic relations inevitably leads structuralists to question what forms of exploitation exist in the international system. Clearly this form of analysis has its roots in classical Marxism which highlighted the unequal economic relationship between the proletariat and the bourgeois classes, and the development of class-consciousness which would ultimately lead to class struggle and revolution leading to the overthrow of capitalism. This strand of thought has recently been dominated by neo-marxists such as Immanuel Wallerstein who have argued that the world capitalist system consists of core, semi-peripheral and peripheral states and that a relationship between these three positions is necessary if global capitalism is to continue to flourish. He has placed considerable importance on the semi-peripheral states because of his belief that these states act as a buffer between the core and the periphery. In their unique position as exploiter and the exploited, their existence prevents the development of a unified opposition to the dominance of the core states - essential for the continuation of world capitalism.[36]

Structuralism must be seen as a "bottom up" perspective on the world 'which prioritises the plight of the poor, the marginalised and the oppressed' (as opposed to Waltz's 'top down' emphasis). As Steans and Pettiford have outlined, 'Structuralists argue that global economic relations are structured so as to benefit certain social classes, and that the resulting 'world-system' is fundamentally unjust'.[37] Structuralism, therefore, highlights a connection between politics and economics, so, given that the thesis places such importance on analysing British economic interests in the GCC States, why has a structuralist basis been rejected? It is worth re-emphasising here that the thesis in no way

claims that it was purely economic interests which shaped British policy in the region - but rather that the discourse of the period was constituted by an emphasis on economics and this in turn helped shape certain perceptions about policy. It is, therefore, the structuralist emphasis on economic issues at the expense of other factors which has led to that particular approach being rejected.

The discussion between the positivists and the post-positivists is the central feature of the third debate. While focusing directly on questions of epistemology, certain aspects of this debate are particularly relevant to an understanding of the position of social constructivism in the discipline of IR. Based on a 'commitment to a unified view of science, and the adoption of methodologies of the natural sciences to explain the social world', positivist assumptions have dominated much of international relations since World War One.[38] Spegele defines positivist beliefs as those which 'include the identification of knowledge at its best with natural science and mathematics ... the idea that science ideally provides [the] best method for describing all facets of the one world in which we live ... and an emphasis on the social value of science and its practical effects'.[39]

Epistemological questions themselves were relegated in the face of an implicit acceptance of a 'rather simple and, crucially an uncontested set of positivist assumptions which have fundamentally stifled debate over both what the world is like and how we might explain it'.[40] In this sense the debates outlined above, realism/idealism and the inter-paradigm debate have all worked under positivist assumptions which therefore gives the impression that they are merely three versions of one international system 'rather than genuine alternative views of international relations'.[41]

According to Smith, positivism has been important not so much because it has given international theory a method but because 'its empiricist epistemology has determined what could be studied because it has determined what kinds of things existed in international relations'.[42] The belief in the unity of science (including the social sciences), an emphasis on the distinction between facts and values, a 'belief in the existence of regularities in the social as well as natural world', and a reliance on the need for empirical validation or falsification are central features of positivism.[43]

By adopting the positivist methodology of the natural sciences, Morgenthau attempted to construct a 'science of international relations'. He claimed that the 'intellectual rigour of this approach would reveal the underlying 'reality' of world politics, from which certainties and predictions could be deduced.'[44] Positivists like Morgenthau therefore believe that there is a 'knowable reality' in international relations which can be revealed by theoretical application. Another useful account is provided by Burchill, who refers to certain theories as having "explanatory" powers, the purpose of which is to 'test[ ] hypothesis[e], propos[e] causal explanations, describ[e] events and explain[ ] general trends and phenomena, [ultimately] with the aim of constructing a plausible image of the world'.[45]

It is thus possible to begin to understand the very distinct nature of post-positivist epistemologies. Hollis and Smith provide a useful distinction categorised as 'explainers' and 'understanders'. Whereas positivist theories seek to explain reality by emphasising empiricist observation, where the analyst is able to detach himself from the analytical process, post-positivism appears more concerned with 'understanding' and the analyst is assumed to be part of the process. In distinguishing between the two positions, Dessler argues that post-modernists and critical theorists 'deny the existence of a reality logically and causally independent of mind ... [thereby generating] deep epistemological criticisms of mainstream social research'. These two positions are therefore radically different from one another.[46] Burchill also contributes by distinguishing between 'explanatory theories' on the one hand and 'constitutive theories' on the other where the latter highlight the effects that the preconceptions, experiences and beliefs of analysts have on the way in which international relations is understood.[47]

***Adopting Social Constructivism***

It is this final version of the 'third debate' in IR, namely that between positivism and post-positivism, which has had a tremendous impact on the recent progress of the discipline. In addition, the contribution made by the social constructivist project needs to be considered in the context of this ongoing debate. The following analysis, therefore, begins by highlighting the core principles of social constructivism and then attempts to distance these principles from key assumptions espoused by rationalist theories like neo-

realism and neo-liberalism. This comparison will confirm why constructivism has been adopted at the expense of other theories as a basis for this thesis.

Defining and identifying its core principles is not an easy task, given that social constructivism is a broad school which spans positivist and post-positivist frameworks. Dessler, for instance, refers to constructivism as a 'broad movement in the study of world politics (and) its slogan that 'ideas and discourse matter' underpins research in a variety of traditions including those of post-modernism, feminism [and] critical theory...'[48] Others, such as Burchill, approach the problem by considering the key debates in IR since the 1980s. As analysed above, during the 1980s neo-realism and neo-liberalism 'sought to apply the logic of rationalist economic theory to international relations, but reached radically different conclusions'. The 1980s were also dominated by a debate between interpretive and rationalist theories where the former challenged the 'epistemological, methodological, ontological and normative assumptions of neo-realism and neo-liberalism' and the latter, based upon choice-theoretic assumptions of micro-economic theory, 'accused interpretive theorists of having little of any substance to say about 'real world' international relations'.[49]

There has been a shift in the nature of the debates since the end of the Cold War. The earlier debate between critical theorists and rationalists evolved to incorporate a number of distinct positions: namely the debates between critical theorists and constructivists on the one hand and between constructivists and rationalists on the other. The common denominator here, social constructivism, sought to 'challenge[ ] the rationalism and positivism of neo-realism and neo-liberalism while simultaneously pushing critical theorists away from meta-theoretical critique to the empirical analysis of world politics'.[50] Therefore, despite roots in critical international theory, constructivism differs due to its increasing emphasis on empirical analysis, and it is this feature which has increasingly led to claims that it occupies, as Adler claims, "the middle ground" between rationalist and interpretive approaches.[51]

This notion of the "middle ground" needs further elaboration. The confusion is compounded by post-positivist claims that constructivists have hidden their rationalist and positivist underpinning. Both critical theory of the third debate and post-modernism have questioned positivist approaches to knowledge and have challenged the scientific

method. As Price and Reus-Smit argue, critical theory was concerned 'primarily with undermining the foundations of dominant discourses in International Relations'.[52] Post-modernism, another post-positivist enterprise, nevertheless shares certain epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions with critical theory. Their criticism of 'objective, empirically verifiable truth statements ... rejection of a single scientific method ...[and] rationalist conceptions of human nature' throws a serious challenge to positivist IR theory.[53] Indeed, post-modernists have gone further by rejecting all meta-narratives such as realism or Marxism, criticising their all-encompassing explanations and world views. By rejecting these attempts at hegemony they argue that their 'scepticism and uncertainty combined with a plurality of world views ... is an appropriate response to a highly complex world'.[54]

Adler argues that the lack of early constructivist empirical research has contributed to the uncertainty over social constructivism. Indeed the 'debates within constructivism itself as to "what constructivism is really about" ... have tended to obscure constructivism's scientific basis ... and its potential contribution to a better understanding of International Relations'.[55] Positivist IR theories seek to discover, through observation, causal factors for questions of international relations, but this process has limited place in interpretivist approaches such as post-modernism and early critical theory. The question arises therefore where to place social constructivism in this ontological, epistemological and methodological debate. According to Dessler, the positions adopted by key social constructivists such as those in Peter Katzenstein's edited volume, the *Culture of National Security*, 'are compatible with a positivist epistemology' and he then goes on to argue that social constructivist empirical analysis should be 'assessed according to positivist standards'.[56] Price and Reus-Smith, however, raise a powerful counter-claim, arguing that constructivism's core assumptions remain firmly embedded within critical theory. They make this claim despite accepting that constructivism is less occupied with meta-theoretical issues and even though constructivist analysis has engaged with the 'mainstream on issues of interpretation and evidence'.[57]

Wendt provides a useful connection between critical theory and constructivism by referring to the former as a family of theories (as opposed to a single theory) which

includes post-modernism, constructivism, neo-Marxism and some feminist theories. Their common denominator is their concern over 'how world politics is socially constructed'. Wendt goes on to argue that this premise involves two basic assumptions: first that the fundamental structures of international politics are social rather than strictly material and second that structures shape actors' identities and interests rather than simply their behaviour. These claims clearly oppose the materialism and rationalism of both neo-realism and neo-liberalism, [58] and will be examined further in due course.

The strength of social constructivism lies in its ability to straddle positivist and post-positivist approaches. Its roots in critical theory provide the constructivist project with reflective and interpretive credentials while its reshaping of many of the core debates in international relations has led Dessler to claim that in the last decade social constructivism has 'emerged as a significant force in empirical research'.[59]

The fundamental essence of constructivism is that it sees international relations as being socially constructed by identity, meanings, the assumptions of actors themselves and indeed by the analysts' linguistic interpretation of social phenomena. Ontologically, social constructivism embodies a number of core principles, beginning with the importance that it places on ideational as well as material structures. The assumption here is that structures in international relations are able to constrain or shape behaviour. Neo-realists, for instance, emphasise systemic anarchy as shaping state behaviour which is ultimately based on material structures such as the balance of power and military capabilities. Constructivists on the other hand argue that 'systems of shared ideas, beliefs and values also have structural characteristics, and that they exert a powerful influence on social and political action'.[60] However, this is not to say that constructivists dismiss material structures. Indeed, material and ideational structures both play a role in shaping behaviour, but for constructivists it is the system of meanings which defines how actors interpret their material environment. As Wendt argues, 'material resources only acquire meaning for human action through the shared knowledge in which they are embedded' and this is in contrast to the de-socialised view held by neo-realists.[61] For constructivists, therefore, individuals are social beings whose interactions involve subjectivity and interpretations where meaning is created through the process of human understanding of the material world.

Hopf provides an excellent analysis of the notion of ideational and material structures by adopting the notion of "power" as a lens. He argues that, though power is central to mainstream and constructivist theorising, their conceptualisation of it differs. Despite their differences neo-realism and neo-liberalism see material power, whether military or economic, as 'the single most important source of influence and authority in global politics'. Constructivists, on the other hand, emphasise both material and discursive power as necessary for any understanding of world affairs. Discursive power is defined as the 'power of knowledge, ideas, culture, and language, that is discourse'.[62] The implications of this for the thesis are discussed later. Ideas as important structures, therefore, are central to constructivist thought as Wendt, for example, claims that material capabilities in themselves explain very little and argues that asking 'when do ideas as opposed to power and interest matter is to ask the wrong question. Ideas always matter, since power and interest do not have effects apart from the shared knowledge that constitutes them as such'.[63] Finally, Albert Yee argues that the 'inability of ... neo-realism ... ultimately to skirt the cognitive complexity of decision making by utilising some form of rationality assumption has led many analysts ... to rediscover the importance of ideas ... in policymaking'.[64]

Secondly, social interactions, subjective interpretations and human understanding of the international environment mean that for constructivists the creation of identities is a necessary feature of international politics. Identities bring order and predictability to the anarchic structure. As Hopf writes, 'A world without identities is a world of chaos, a world of pervasive and irremediable uncertainty, a world much more dangerous than anarchy'. He goes on to qualify the importance of identities by highlighting the functions that they perform, namely: 'they tell you and others who you are and they tell you who others are. In telling you who you are, identities strongly imply a particular set of interests or preferences with respect to choices of action in particular domains, and with respect to particular actors'.[65] In other words identities inform interests which in turn outline particular forms of action. Hopf goes on to argue that

> A state understands others according to the identity it attributes to them, while simultaneously reproducing its own identity through daily social practice. The crucial observation here is that the producer of the identity is

> not in control of what it ultimately means to others; the intersubjective structure is the final arbiter of meaning.[66]

Similarly Arfi in analysing the social construction of ethnic fear and insecurity through specific forms of discourse defines social identities as a 'set of meanings that an actor attributes to itself while taking the perceptive of others ... [it] defines the actor and provides information on its interest and behaviour'.[67] The commonality here is the view that identities and interests are closely connected. When comparing this notion to the perceptions held by conventional theories such as neo-realism and neo-liberalism, the differences become even more apparent. Mainstream theories define interests and identities as exogenous and given where actors, as Burchill et al argue, 'encounter one another with a pre-existing set of preferences'. Such theorists are not interested in 'where such preferences come from, only in how actors pursue them strategically.' In contrast to this de-socialised view, they argue that constructivists claim that it is necessary to understand how actors develop these interests and identities, since this provides the ability to explain a wider range of international political phenomena that rationalists ignore.[68]

Waltz's neorealist analysis, for instance, conceptualises the structure of international relations in terms of self-help which explains the competitive nature of anarchy and thus, as Wendt argues, 'occupies a privileged explanatory role ... setting the terms for and unaffected by interaction [and] states failing to conform to [this logic are likely to be] driven from the system'.[69] This shows that such features are exogenous to the states and their interactions. The notion of self-help clearly exists independently of time, place and state interaction. Constructivists, however, argue that this logic fails to explain why, for instance, some states are allies and others are enemies. Neo-realism sees states as lacking the autonomy in their abilities to mitigate against the effects of anarchy, since this assumption remains rigid regardless of time and space.

Similarly, realist thought denotes much of its attention to the notion of national interest, arguing that the policies and actions of states emerge from their need for security in an international system based on anarchy and the distribution of power. Despite this conceptual emphasis on "interest", however, Weldes argues that realist content 'defined as the security and survival of the state ... is so general as to be indeterminate'.[70] He

criticises it further by claiming that it 'rests on a questionable empiricist epistemology which ignores the centrality of processes of interpretation'. Its assumption that there is an independent reality which outlines objectively and accurately the threats to a state, its national interests and policy options is necessarily flawed given that 'objects and events do not present themselves unproblematically to the [analyst]'.[71] As Weldes states,

> Determining what the particular situation faced by the state is, what if any threat a state faces, and what the correct national interest with respect to that situation or threat is, always requires interpretation ... [Realism] with its assumptions that threats are self-evident, cannot explain why particular situations are understood to constitute threats to the state. It therefore also cannot explain why certain actions, ostensibly taken in response to these threats, are in the national interest in the first place[72]

Wendt, instrumental in outlining the key principles of constructivism, successfully re-conceptualised the notions of identity and consequently interests in 'Anarchy is what states make of it', and thus advanced the cause of constructivist thought in international relations. Linked to the perception outlined above that ideas are central to constructivist thought is the notion that identity and interests can be created and changed through intersubjective processes. The way in which actors behave towards objects is dependent upon the meanings that those objects have for them, meanings that are intersubjectively constituted. As Wendt argues 'states act differently towards enemies than they do towards friends because enemies are threatening and friends are not'. In contrast the de-socialised ethos of neo-realism is unable to distinguish between such social characteristics. Granted, the distribution of power and the anarchic structure of the international system affect state behaviour but how they do so 'depends on the intersubjective understandings and expectations, on the distribution of knowledge, that constitute [its] conceptions of self and other'.[73]

A third main characteristic of constructivism is that of mutual constitution, namely the perception that observer and observed cannot be separate entities. Reality for constructivists is socially constructed, as the material and social worlds construct or constitute each other. Despite key constructivists like Katzenstein adopting positions which are compatible with positivist epistemology, there is a rejection of certain positivist tenets of the methodological unity of science. As Dunne outlines, this rejection of the scientism of naturalism ensures that the interests of the observer cannot be

separated from the subject being observed. This mutually constitutive nature means that the subject matter and observer are part of a single process.[74] The implications of this for constructivist analysis are profound, since the analysts' own perceptions of reality take on added significance. It is also an acceptance that there may be multiple realities each as valid as the other. Undoubtedly this assumption has its roots in the rejection by post-positivist theories such as post-modernism of hegemonic claims by meta-narratives.

The notion of mutual constitution also extends to the structure-agency debate with the constructivists claiming that actor behaviour is neither exclusively determined by social structures nor the result of individual agents. Instead, the relationship has a mutual orientation whereby agents and structure constitute one another. As Burchill et al state, 'Normative and ideational structures may well condition the identities and interests of actors, but those structures would not exist if it were not for the knowledgeable practices of those actors'.[75] This is clearly in contrast to the two dominant perspectives, the first being that agents are the dominant element whose practices are responsible for the formation of structures. The second specifies that structures have greater force than agents and are therefore able to set conditions and constraints upon their practices.[76]

The constructivist alternative specifies that agents and structures remain inseparable, so that structures are able to impose constraints on agents but can themselves only be explained by the practices of agents.[77] This "middle ground" adopted by constructivism can once again be contrasted with the neo-realist position where states are seen to have no autonomy in their interactions in the face of the structural constraints imposed by anarchy. Under neo-realism the anarchic structure is a given, sets the terms for, and exists independently of state interaction. The constructivist emphasis on social as well as material structures, its treatment of identities and interests as a consequence of social practices, and the importance it attaches to mutual constitution of structure and agency shows that anarchy is, ultimately, 'what states make of it' through their social interaction, meaning creation, and cultural and linguistic practices.[78]

Finally, it may be useful to end this section with a brief account of Ruggie's analysis of social constructivism in *Constructing the world polity: essays on international institutionalisation*. He claims that it was the post World War 2 aversion to idealism and the resulting primacy of realist theory which led to the relegation of ideational factors in

international relations. The neo-realist and neo-liberal treatment of ideas in strictly neo-utilitarian terms reinforced this position and it wasn't until the full-scale debates between positivist and post-positivist theories that the discipline began to emerge from its narrow confines. As Ruggie states, neo-realism and neo-liberalism 'share a view of the world ... in utilitarian terms: an atomistic universe of self-regarding units whose identity is assured, given and fixed, and who are responsive largely ... to material interests ...'[79] Social constructivism on the other hand, 'seeks to account for what neo-utilitarianism assumes: the identity and/or interests of actors ... In addition, it attributes to ideational factors ... social efficacy over and above any functional utility they may have, including a role in shaping the way in which actors define their identity and interests in the first place'.[80]

*The Hypothesis - Social Constructivist Principles and British Foreign Policy*

Social Constructivism, therefore, can be differentiated from rationalist theories such as neo-realism and neo-liberal institutionalism in terms of its core assumptions. Whereas rationalism treats material structures as exogenous and given in a desocialised world the essence of constructivism is that it sees international relations as being socially constructed through the interplay of ideational as well as material structures. These systems of shared ideas, meanings, assumptions of actors themselves and linguistic interpretation also have structural characteristics whereby they can exert influence on political action. Material structures are not dismissed, but for constructivists the interpretation of material objects depends upon the meanings that those objects have for individuals. Clearly this becomes a two-way relationship in which human perception and the material world are involved in a mutually constitutive process whereby they construct each other.

Closely linked to this is the importance that constructivism attaches to the notion of identity - identities define the self and others but carry with them significant implications with regard to relationships and actions - hence crucially identities inform interests. This contrasts with mainstream theories like neo-realism which treat identities and interests in the same way as they treat material structures - as exogenous and given.

In other words, actors approach international relations with preconceived notions irrespective of time and space. As shown above, constructivists such as Wendt have shown that identities and interests are endogenous to international relations and can be created and changed through intersubjective processes. As McSweeney states, 'identity is not a fact of society, it is a process of negotiation among people and interest groups. Identity is a consequence of a political process which constitutes reality ...'[81]

For Constructivists, therefore, reality is socially constructed by individuals whose interactions involve subjectivity and interpretation. The epistemological foundations of positivism are not entirely rejected, but at the same time constructivism can lay claim to the "middle ground" with its emphasis on interpretation, reflection and the laying down of constitutive questions. It succeeds in claiming origins in critical theory but also steers away from meta-theoretic discussion towards asking questions about "real world international relations". Nevertheless, its rejection of the hegemony of rationalist meta-narratives crucially opens the door into the realm of interpretation and the multiple explanations that go along with this. Linked to this notion of interpretation is the view that the analyst and the subject matter are no longer separate but rather part of and included in a single process. The perceptions, opinions, subjectivity and consciousness of the observer provide meaning to the subject matter thus ensuring that there are no neutral and entirely objective facts. By conceiving international relations as the product of social practices, international relations are dynamic and can consequently be changed or reconstituted by actors - in essence international relations are dependent upon how actors interpret their environment and the meanings they attach to the material world.

Finally, to quote from Ruggie:

> Constructivism is not a theory of international relations as balance of power theory is for instance, rather it is a theoretically informed approach to the study of international relations ... [It] concerns the issue of human consciousness: the role it plays in international relations, and the implications for the logic and methods of social enquiry of taking it seriously. Constructivists hold the view that the building blocks of international reality are ideational as well as material; that ideational factors have normative as well as instrumental dimensions; that they express not only individual but also collective intentionality; and that the meaning and significance of ideational factors are not independent of time and space ... even identities are generated in part by international interaction ...[and] at the level of individual actors, constructivism ...

> seeks to map the full array of additional ideational factors that shape actors' outlooks and behaviour ranging from culture and ideology, to aspirations and principled beliefs ...[82]

The preceding analysis has identified both the strengths of the constructivist project and the weaknesses of some of the mainstream theories in explaining international relations. This thesis will therefore adopt constructivist theory as a basis to analyse the extent to which material economic interests shaped British foreign policy towards the GCC States.

Since the period of the study is the Thatcher era, the central tenets of Thatcherism (discussed below in section 2) form an integral part of this analysis. As the following evaluation will demonstrate, Thatcherism was a belief system dominated by ideas of economics, incentives and interests, which in turn were based on materialism. The discourse of the era allows us to see that the nature of foreign policy at the time was understood to be overwhelmingly shaped by materialism. The hypothesis is, therefore, that the central elements of Thatcherism created a framework for approaching foreign policy, and that the nature of British foreign policy towards the GCC States during the Thatcher era was constructed by the positivist discourse of economic interests.

This hypothesis warrants further explanation. Constructivism focuses on the creation of meanings reproduced by human interpretation of social interactions. It argues that ideas are central to the discourse and in this context ideational structures can be seen to correlate to state behaviour. As has been demonstrated above, ideas refer to the beliefs that exist within the public domain and play the role of underpinning the values, norms and other individual and collective understanding held by actors participating in social interaction. Constructivist analysis places much greater emphasis on the role of ideas than rationalist theories such as neo-realism. In addition to being sceptical about the role of ideas, neo-realism highlights that it is the rational behaviour of actors which generates policy outcomes. This relegation of ideas and perceptions contributes to the inability of neo-realism to proceed beyond its rigid explanation of the international system.

One notable exception amongst rationalist theories which does place some importance on the role of ideas is neo-liberal institutionalism. The neo-neo synthesis

highlighted a convergence between the positions adopted by neo-realism and neo-liberal institutionalism when the latter accepted that under conditions of low or no co-operation in the international system neo-realist explanations of structural anarchy were correct. However, neo-liberal institutionalists sought to distance themselves from neo-realists by arguing that co-operation remained possible even under conditions of anarchy. To strengthen their argument neo-liberal institutionalists Goldstein and Keohane crucially investigated the impact of ideas and beliefs on foreign policy. In an important text, *Ideas and foreign policy: beliefs, institutions and political change*, they categorised beliefs (ideas) into three areas, namely, world views, principal beliefs and causal beliefs. World views are defined as the most general and universal ideas providing normative, ideological, ethical and religious reasons behind actor behaviour. Principled beliefs provide actors with a reference point from which to define their actions. As Goldstein and Keohane argue, actors often draw on their world views in order to define their normative principles. Finally, causal beliefs provide individuals with guidance on how to pursue their objectives and interests.[83]

By highlighting the roles that such ideas/beliefs play in influencing policy outcomes, Goldstein and Keohane successfully showed that the effects of anarchy can be mitigated against and that co-operation is possible. Nevertheless, neo-liberal institutionalism remains epistemologically and ontologically firmly embedded within the confines of positivism and rationalism. It is possible, therefore, to distinguish between neo-liberal notions on "ideas" as being individualisitic whereas constructivism sees them as mutually constituted in a social context. Ideational structures are fundamental to constructivism, since behaviour within a historical setting is explained in terms of the norms and values that the actors hold and are socialised with.

Though these characteristics were dealt with earlier, they are worth reiterating, given the importance that constructivism attaches to meaning creation through intersubjective and social interaction. When the hypothesis refers to the "central elements of Thatcherism", therefore, it is referring to the "ideas" embodied within this particular belief system, in this case economics, interests and incentives. The case study will demonstrate how it is possible to construct meaning or draw conclusions out of the raw material and linguistic resources drawn upon during the research process. Weldes refers

to this as the 'The process of articulation ... [which] is one in which ... extant linguistic resources are combined to produce contingent and contextually specific representations of the world'.[84]

Finally, there are a number of additional questions relating to constructivism as an approach that will need to be addressed in the conclusions to each of the chapters and to the thesis itself. Firstly, given that the discourse of the Thatcher era was overwhelmingly shaped by economic factors and given the Government's aims in the Persian Gulf region - inevitably shaped by Thatcherite beliefs - was the Government successful in meeting their aims as they defined them? Secondly, does constructivism allow for the identification of alternative explanations for British foreign policy which were not present in the discourse? The answer to this may be that since the discourse was dominated by economics, identifying alternative explanations such as human rights or ethics may be difficult. However, since constructivism embodies reflective and interpretive principles, the observer is able to ask constitutive questions and therefore his/her opinions become part of the discourse, thereby leading to the possible identification of alternatives.

## Section 2: Ideational Constructs: Thatcherism and British Foreign Policy

The preceding section engaged with some of the general theoretical literature in International Relations and considered the basic tenets of some mainstream theories such as realism, neo-realism and neo-liberal institutionalism. It also explained that the central principles of constructivism, namely, its emphasis on discourse, language, meaning creation, and the importance it attaches to the mutual constitution of ideational and material structures, signify its relevance as a basis for this thesis. It has also been claimed that Thatcherite discourse was constituted by material economic interests and the case study will analyse this discourse in search of evidence to support this. In order to facilitate this, however, a further factor needs to be analysed in light of the earlier claim that Mrs. Thatcher herself played an important role in constituting the discourse of the era. The hypothesis above stated that certain elements of Thatcherism influenced the formation of a specific foreign policy based upon material economic interests. The

purpose of the following section, therefore, is to ask a number of key questions relating to Thatcherism as a belief system which in turn gave rise to a framework for approaching foreign policy.

One factor which has become obvious in conducting the survey is that no analyst has been able to provide a clear, concise or widely accepted definition of the concept of Thatcherism. The so-called 'Thatcher phenomenon' has, however, attracted much attention and as a consequence numerous views have emerged. Major areas of disagreement have been the issue of whether or not to label 'Thatcherism' as an ideology and, related to this, the question of whether the Thatcher era represented a radical departure from past policies or whether, despite the rhetoric, there remained a large degree of continuity. The disagreements, therefore, have largely been between those who argued that there was nothing special, let alone ideological, about Thatcherism and those who were convinced that Mrs. Thatcher introduced something new and significant into British political life.

The phenomenon now known as Thatcherism came about in reaction to perceptions of Britain's decline during the decades of the post-war period and therefore any analysis of that phenomenon must take into account the historical background of the period. In 1945, following the end of World War Two, the Labour Government was eager to reinforce and re-establish Britain's international position, in both military and financial terms, but it faced the task of somehow converting the wartime economy into an effective system for economic development. The Conservatives, on the other hand, when they returned to power in 1951, rejected the idea of a formal plan, and let market forces take their course. This led initially to 'rising living standards, full employment and a relative social stability ... An unusual consensus characterised British society presided over by the Tories – in which conflict appeared relatively marginal or at least thoroughly contained'.[85]

However, by the time Labour returned to power in 1964 there was growing concern about the economy, as it became apparent that the 'boom' of the fifties had been deceptive. Britain's competitors such as the United States and Japan were gaining ground, and it became increasingly apparent that the traditional imperial markets on which Britain had relied would no longer be sufficiently powerful to raise the country

from its decline. As Bob Rowthorn has explained, the increasing pressure on Sterling meant that London's position as a world financial centre was becoming increasingly uncertain.[86] This brought about, as Hall and Jacques stated, a 'growing conviction of the need to modernise the economy and society', which in turn was largely responsible for the Labour Government's return to power, and it therefore adopted a "modernist" approach on several fronts. Its aim was to make industrial capital more competitive, and it saw the state itself as a key agent in this, particularly in collaboration with major companies and unions. It therefore set up the Department of Economic Affairs with the intention of creating successful plans for economic development, but in light of the industrial capitalists' unwillingness to relinquish any real power, these measures proved inadequate, given the extent of Britain's weakness. Indeed, in the face of the Sterling Crisis, the plan was abandoned, and this led to an extended period of crisis: 'As economic difficulties ... multiplied, government policy [went] from one desperate experiment to another and, until the advent of the Thatcher Government in 1979, there [was] nothing which [could] be described as a long term strategy for the economy'.[87] As the economic difficulties continued, the Government concentrated increasingly on the working class, but this aggravated the situation, leading to Trade Union opposition and increasing dissension among the working classes, which eventually led to the Tories regaining power in 1970.

This period, therefore, was one of major structural change when 'the previous ruling strategy was increasingly seen to have failed'. Britain's 'standing' in the world seemed to have changed irrevocably, and this brought into question all aspects of the political system, leading to 'a crisis of the established forms of hegemony, a situation where the old forms of rule, previous ideological assumptions and the established patterns of alliances became increasingly difficult to sustain'.[88]

In light of this, when the Heath Government returned in 1970 it made a determined bid for power in Europe by entering the EEC. However, it did not continue Labour's modernist approach, but rather emphasised market forces as opposed to the State's role in industry, and reasserted its authority over the working classes by adopting a much more aggressively modernist approach. Rather than improving the economic situation, however, this stance caused such fierce resistance on the part of the Trade

Unions and the working classes that it forced the Tories to abandon their position and move 'from a pre-Thatcherite position to a comprehensive corporatist approach, which more closely resembled Labour's modernism'.[89]

When the minority Labour Government came to power in 1974, therefore, it was against a background of increased working class militancy which influenced the initial policies, and it promised to 'implement a vigorous programme of industrial regeneration'. However, despite changes to industrial relations policies in an attempt to pacify the working classes, there was no major change of direction. It was more a case of adopting a persuasive, rather than an aggressive approach. As Hall and Jacques stated: 'Formally speaking, the modernist project remained, but, as Britain's own economic crisis grew increasingly acute with the onset of the international ... recession, the Government's approach consisted of little more than pragmatic crisis-management in which the central element was securing working class acquiescence to cuts in real wages and public expenditure together with rising unemployment'.[90]

Having shown that British governments during the post-war era became preoccupied with Britain's economic decline, the question arises whether this decline translated to a wider reduction in international status and power. There was an emerging perception that the level of resources had to match the world-wide commitments and by the mid-1950s it was clear that Britain was facing relative economic and political decline. The Suez Crisis of 1956, in particular, was indicative of Britain's changing position in that it demonstrated that it no longer had the capacity to maintain an imperial role. Thereafter, the Conservatives under Macmillan accepted the need for withdrawal from commitments east of Suez.[91]

Paul Sharp also provides a useful historical summary of Britain's declining international position between 1945 and 1979. As well as receiving a reduced share of the world's trade, merchant shipping, overseas investment, and the gross product 'all shrank dramatically'. He goes on to state that, 'Over the same period, the Empire, as any sort of cohesive force in international politics, disappeared, and Britain became dependent on the US for military technology, most notable the delivery systems for its nuclear warheads'.[92] Sharp blames Britain's decline as a world power on the emergence of other States such as Germany, the Soviet Union and Japan who all had larger economies: 'Their economic

size and strength gave them a potential for world power which Britain could not hope to match, let alone master ... Britain's relative decline was inevitable, therefore'.[93]

According to Sharp, the British Government had a number of options in 1945, namely, to accept the new weakness and retire from the world stage, to seek a more modest role, or to act as if nothing had changed. He claims, however, that a reduced role was not considered since Britain had emerged on the winning side and it did not appear, at the time, that World War 2 had destroyed Britain's great power status. Britain's decline was also partly due to America's preferences for a world based upon open economies. This did not 'augur well for Britain whose wealth depended upon preferential relations with the Commonwealth and the Empire'.[94] Given these fears over US intentions, post-war leaders remained adamant that Britain had to retain as much international involvement as possible and it could be argued, therefore, that this decision was a conscious response rather than a failure to recognise Britain's new reduced circumstances.

Britain's need to retain great power status was based upon the belief that, once lost, such power and influence could not be regained. It was this perception which seriously damaged post-war British foreign policy, since situations such as the Suez crisis highlighted the significant changes in Britain's capabilities. Although some colonial possessions were relinquished, such as India and Palestine, others such as the Persian Gulf States were seen as too valuable militarily and commercially. In the context of the Gulf, Britain wished to retain considerable influence by being seen as 'a modern, industrial power which was independently procuring the latest military means and was at the centre of a system of states bound by reasons of history, sentiment and practical self interest who looked to Britain for leadership on questions of international importance'.[95]

This was believed possible by means of the economic recovery prevalent during the 1950s. However, as Suez so vividly demonstrated, it was open to serious misinterpretation. Following the Suez crisis, it was realised that Britain not only needed US acquiescence to use force but that it no longer had the economic means to act alone. This is confirmed by Sharp who states that this situation 'remained axiomatic for the next quarter century until ... Argentina invaded the Falklands Islands in 1982'.[96]

The debates on Thatcherism have raged between those who have seen it as an ideology with coherent views and a grand plan and those who stress that it introduced nothing new and that it was merely a moral instinct based upon Mrs. Thatcher's own personal views. An actual definition is almost impossible, but as Kavanagh states, 'Since 1979 the so-called Thatcher experiment in Britain has attracted attention, partly because Mrs. Thatcher's Conservative Government has broken with so many features of the post-war consensus ...'.[97] This consensus can be defined as general agreement on policy across the parties, and a willingness to compromise and bargain even in cases of disagreement. There had, therefore, been considerable continuity between governments during the post-war period, and the central tenets had been commitment to full employment and providing welfare, in other words the "Butskellism" which had emerged in the late 1940s and 50s. However, these attitudes, which were part of the Keynesian legacy, had become increasingly problematic as the pressure on the public purse continued to increase, and Britain was having to borrow more and more to counterbalance industrial failings. A further danger was over-reliance on North Sea oil, which was postponing the eventual inevitability of economic reform.

The so-called consensus, however, had begun to break down even before Thatcher, for example, as Riddell clarifies, with Edward Heath's short-lived quiet revolution in the early 1970s, and most significantly with the oil shock of 1973. Riddell goes on to state that subsequently Callaghan and Wilson abandoned any attempts to attain full employment but that 'The key shift towards a broadly monetarist approach and tougher control on public expenditure occurred under Labour from 1976 onwards'.[98] Despite attempts to curb Trade Union power and resuscitate Britain's economy, the word "decline" entered the political vocabulary by the end of the 1970s and as a consequence, as Jenkins claims, the 1979 General Election was fought openly on this issue. As the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Geoffrey Howe, stated during his first budget address: 'In the last few years, the hard facts of our relative decline have become increasingly plain, and the threat of absolute decline has gradually become very real'.[99] Jenkins goes on to state that for Mrs. Thatcher therefore "consensus" meant the appeasement of socialism and the advance of collectivism. Her approach was accorded the label

"conviction politics" and can be defined as '...a way of declaring that she was not bound by the consensual wisdom ... but by her own passionately held beliefs'.[100]

It therefore remains difficult to define Thatcherism, but a number of common themes can be identified. Central to these, however, is the question of whether or not Thatcherism can be regarded as an ideology, and as a consequence the definitions range, as Taylor states, '...from celebrations of the individual herself to Marxist analyses of a new hegemonic bloc'.[101] On the other hand, there are numerous examples of writers who argue that Thatcherism must not be seen as ideological, but rather concentrate on its range of characteristics. Holmes, for instance, defines Thatcherism as 'an instinct, a series of moral values and ... an expression of Mrs. Thatcher's upbringing in Grantham, her background of hard work and family responsibility, ambition and postponed satisfaction, duty and patriotism'.[102] Marquand takes this further and lists a series of dimensions to Thatcherism which define it as a response to the collective despair of continuing national decline; as a vehicle for the promotion of economic liberalism; as a revolt against the social liberalism of the 1960s, and as Mrs. Thatcher personally emphasising her charismatic leadership with its populist overtone. However, as Taylor states, Marquand's dimensions, though describing the phenomenon of Thatcherism, do not constitute a coherent ideology.[103] This is backed up by Jenkins who defines ideology as a consistent system of ideas, but claims that Thatcher's '...conviction politics were largely instinctive and very much the product of her own experience. Those instincts were narrow in range, dogmatically voiced [and] that she came to be credited with an 'ism' ... [was] a tribute to the force of her beliefs rather than to their coherence'.[104]

Biddiss also recognises the divisions over the precise meaning of Thatcherism, and places emphasis on Thatcher's style of leadership and her values. Like Jenkins, he places importance on her conviction politics and describes as crucial the link between her upbringing as the daughter of a small trader in the uncertain economic circumstances of the 1930s and 'her deep feeling for small businessmen and people who [were] staking their livelihoods on their activities'.[105] Letwin also admits the existence of problems in defining Thatcherism but insists that it is possible to categorise. These categories include regarding it as a mere 'ragbag of ideas', asserting that Thatcherism was also occurring elsewhere as all governments were becoming more conservative, were cutting public

borrowing, deregulating the private sector and so on, and finally claiming that what happened after 1979 perhaps had no distinctive pattern and that, as a consequence, Thatcherism is a meaningless label.[106]

Letwin goes on to argue, however, that since Thatcherism is a widely used term there has to be some meaning attached to it and offers a range of possible labels. These include Thatcherism as an economic enterprise, as a drive for power, and as a moral crusade. Those who label it as an economic enterprise claim that it was a clearly focused programme to increase economic efficiency and therefore was a conscious 'effort to put into practice an economic dogma'. The roots of Thatcherism are, in this context, connected to Adam Smith and Milton Friedman, and are thereby equated with monetarism and strict control of the money supply. As a drive for power Letwin insists that Thatcherism is nothing like an ideology or any other system of ideas. She claims that it is '...rather driven and shaped by ambition ... [which] is allied to certain instincts which being narrow in range and dogmatically voiced, created the illusion of an ideology'. Similarly those who see Thatcherism as a moral crusade dismiss power and economics as Thatcherite objectives and instead claim that the 'object of the crusade ... is to restore old-fashioned discipline in Britain', centering on antipathy to inflation, respect for authority and law and order.[107]

Kavanagh confirms that there are problems associated with analysing Thatcherism but identifies three different contexts in which the term has been used. The first refers to Mrs. Thatcher's no-nonsense style of leadership and her hostility towards gaining agreement by consensus. Secondly, there are claims that Thatcherism is synonymous with the creation of a state and government strong enough to resist the demands of pressure groups via 'law and order, traditional moral values, a stable currency, and a free economy'; and thirdly Thatcherism has been labelled as a reaction against the post-war consensus such as Keynesian economics, high welfare spending, inflation, and trade union militancy. From this he concludes that

> Thatcherism is a matter both of style and policies. As a political style – emanating from Mrs. Thatcher herself – it vigorously challenges many established beliefs and interests, boldly expresses personal and often right-wing views, and does not compromise on many deeply held political principles.[108]

He then goes on to analyse Thatcherism in the context of its policies which, he states, rested on four separate foundations, namely, a determination to reduce inflation by controlling the money supply, a commitment to reduce the public sector along with the active encouragement of a free market economy, an attempt to free the labour market and curb excessive trade union power, and finally a resolve to strengthen the authority of the government.[109]

As can be seen from the various definitions, Thatcherism cannot be discussed without reference to the economic situation prevailing at the time, and in this context it must be seen as a rejection of the social democratic consensus prevalent during the post-war period. It was the defeat of the Heath Government between the years 1972 and 1974 by trade union power which encouraged a major reassessment of British politics. The strength of the trade unions had highlighted the weaknesses in democracy as differing interests meant that parties were compelled to struggle against one another in a bid to gain votes. This led to the perception that Britain was becoming ungovernable and the Thatcherite solution was to roll back the state and base its economic policy not on servicing the many interests but on controlling the money supply. As Taylor states:

> Stripped of their guilt, the Conservatives could allow the market and not the state to be the great distributor by rewarding enterprise and penalising dependence ... In this argument, therefore, Thatcherism ... has broken through the logjam of the social democratic consensus and produced a new era of British politics.[110]

Jessop et al regard the focus on monetarism as merely one factor in the search for a definition of Thatcherism, and identify a range of other equally relevant elements including Thatcher's personal attitudes and beliefs. Even though the Thatcher era may have represented 'something special or even unique ... which justifies associating [her] with a specific "ism"', they stress that the "ism" is 'better deciphered from Thatcher's conference speeches, personal statements ... and interviews than it is from the policies and actions of her government'. They also focus on issues of her personality and political style rather than merely emphasising her direct personal qualities, and examine the impact of Thatcherism on the strategies and policies of the Conservative Party itself and the influence that this may have had on the restructuring of various segments of society.

This realisation that a definition of Thatcherism cannot rest merely on one strand of analysis means that, as Jessop et al state

> ... Thatcherism must be related to the long-run relative decline of the British economy ... and the mode of growth with which this came to be associated; it must be related more directly to the emerging crisis of the specific form of Britain's insertion into the global economy after 1945 and its associated social democratic mode of economic and political regulation; and it must be related to the organic crisis of British society which once again became acute in the mid-1970s.[111]

The above analysis leads to the belief that there has been a clear style to British politics since 1979. However, as Riddell states, the many differing interpretations have meant that there is a tendency, 'particularly on the left, to make Thatcherism seem more clear-cut than it is – to devise an ideology from what is in practice a series of values and instincts. Both opponents and supporters of the Thatcher Administration have created more of a pattern from disconnected events and policies than is warranted'.[112] Indeed, far left or Marxist analyses were amongst the first theoretical studies of Thatcherism and provide a most lucid focal point for understanding possible ideological foundations. Marxist studies have argued that Thatcherism constitutes a coherent ideology and see it as establishing an 'illiberal, strong state, waging class warfare against the working class and progressive groups such as ethnic minorities and feminists. Thatcherism is [thus] regarded as a form of social control of which market disciplines are only one exposition'.[113] In addition, it may be argued that in view of its contrast to the Keynesian era which preceded it, Thatcherism does mark a radical departure of an ideological type.

Riddell, however, disagrees with the view that Thatcherism was an ideology and argues that the "ism" was more of a reflection of the time. As he states, 'There have obviously been ideological elements in the approach of Mrs. Thatcher and the Conservatives since 1979 – for instance, the dislike of state intervention in the economy – but this has not produced a pre-determined strategy'. He then goes on to refute Marxist claims by stating, 'To talk, as the new Marxists do, of a coherent hegemonic project, or of the Thatcher project, is meaningless, as well as absurd. It is part of the dire linguistic

legacy of Marx and Gramsci, which makes the work of many Marxists commentators so indigestible and so misleadingly determinist'.[114]

The difficulties entailed in defining Thatcherism have become apparent in the above analysis, and the debate over whether or not to regard the phenomenon as an ideology remains unresolved. But it is possible to moderate between the various extreme views regarding Thatcherism and adopt, as Gould and Digby state, a middle way which can be 'gauged by a selection ... of its associated slogans and conviction politics'. Its popular capitalism, medium term financial strategy, reduction of public borrowing, pushing back the welfare state and attitudes to law and order 'all suggest a hard-headed, unsentimental, realistic approach'.[115]

One of the most important elements to emerge from the debate on Thatcherism, however, has been the extent to which it represented a departure from past policies. As already highlighted, academic opinion varies greatly in this regard ranging from those who see Thatcherism as representing a radical change to those who see events post 1979 as merely a continuation of previous policy. Marsh et al also discuss this question by stating that Thatcherite literature includes those who emphasise that significant change did occur in policy in many areas with others being more sceptical '...arguing that disaggregation is crucial, with significantly more change in some areas than others'.[116]

Much of the case study analysis on Thatcherism has centred on areas such as privatisation, health and housing policy, civil service reform, and industrial policy, with very few studies conducted on Thatcherite influence in foreign policy. Amongst these have been Freedman's analysis on the Falklands war and some studies on the motivations for British defence exports.[117] However, no definitive studies have been conducted on British foreign policy towards the Persian Gulf during this period, despite the fact that this remained a crucial area during the three Thatcher terms. In fact, in light of the importance of the Persian Gulf to British interests (defined later) this area might have been expected to be a particularly prevalent part of the Thatcherism debate.

The questions which were highlighted as part of the debate on Thatcherism are still relevant in the foreign policy context, as it is necessary to query Mrs. Thatcher's role in British foreign policy and question whether her influence brought about a more aggressive stance, thereby reversing the perceived decline in Britain's global position. As

already indicated, there is a perception that a sizeable gap existed between Mrs. Thatcher's rhetoric and the actual implementation of policy. This perception is applicable, as Dolowitz and Marsh highlight, in the case of various domestic policies, and it must be considered whether this was also the case in foreign policy implementation.[118]

In order to establish the importance of Mrs. Thatcher's role in foreign policy in general and towards the Persian Gulf in particular, two differing perceptions need to be identified. The first, held by a large number of academics, is that Thatcher was predominantly interested in the domestic arena and played a very limited role in British foreign policy. In this context the appointment of Lord Carrington, a highly experienced politician and diplomat, as Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, is seen as reflecting Mrs. Thatcher's priorities of placing domestic policies at the top of her agenda. Indeed, when the Thatcher Administration came to power, it was against a background of decline and pessimism brought about by the economic failures of the late 1970s alongside a considerable reduction in Britain's global role. There is no doubt, therefore, that in 1979 the task facing the new Conservative Government was to arrest the ongoing decline, before moving on to reassert Britain's presence in Europe and beyond. For instance as Sharp states, it is

> Important to understand that Thatcher had no strong foreign policy convictions at an early stage...Thatcher knew little and cared less about international relations...she did not yet believe that international affairs were important to what she sought to accomplish. Restoring Britain, for her, was primarily a matter of pursuing the correct domestic policies: reducing the money supply, lowering taxes, cutting public expenditure.[119]

Therefore, since Thatcherism appears to have centred primarily around domestic economic policy, it is perhaps difficult to identify a distinctive Thatcherite foreign policy. There is a second perception, however, which centres on Mrs. Thatcher's aim of reversing Britain's global decline by means of her vehemently anti-Soviet stance, her forceful patriotism, and her unshakeable belief in the Anglo-American special relationship. Mrs. Thatcher had a very different attitude towards policy from all other Conservative Prime Ministers, as she had no formal foreign affairs background, and her style in this field was based purely on her own personal patriotism and anti-communist

attitude. Her forceful attitude may not have been popular with the Whitehall elite, but it ensured that for the general public Thatcherism in the field of foreign affairs came to mean strong defence policy, as demonstrated by the Falklands War and the Second Gulf War. This was all the more striking in view of the Labour Government's unilateralism post-1982. As Holmes states 'what has made her approach to foreign policy unique is that she has conducted international relations in an era when the post-war consensus on British defence policy had collapsed, leaving a clear-cut contrast between a Thatcherite pro-Nato, pro-nuclear stance and the unilateralism of the Labour Party'.[120]

Although Byrd acknowledges the fact that foreign policy was a relatively unknown area of the three Thatcher Governments, he refers to Thatcher's resolute approach as highly ideological, closely identifies it with Mrs. Thatcher herself, and quotes it in support of the premise that Thatcherism represented a radical departure. His contribution to the literature has its basis in the argument that foreign policy under Thatcher was synonymous with 'high politics' and that although the content of foreign policy had not changed dramatically the 'external environment ha[d] become more challenging while at the same time the domestic consensus of foreign and defence policy ha[d] weakened'. It is in this light, therefore, that foreign policy under Thatcher took on a 'domestic political significance and [became] an important tool in the game of party politics'.[121]

Foreign policy is one area, therefore, in which it is impossible to separate the policy from the personality and style of the Prime Minister herself as Mrs. Thatcher played a dominant role in its formulation, especially during her later years in office. Her influence was particularly apparent with regard to policy on arms control, the European Community (EC), the Falklands, South Africa and, significantly in this case, the Gulf, and this led to a belief that Britain had returned to a far more influential global position.[122]

The above analysis has shown that defining Thatcherism is not straightforward, though there are some common elements which emerge. The debate reveals distinct opinions including those who see it as a distinct ideology with coherent views and a grand plan and those who stress that it did not represent anything new and was merely a moral instinct based upon Mrs. Thatcher's own personal views. However, her revolt

against the social liberalism of the 1960s, her promotion of economic liberalism, and the adoption of a distinctly domestic economic enterprise based upon interests and incentives represented a conscious effort to put economic dogma into practice. These factors provide a basis upon which to claim that Thatcherite discourse was indeed constituted by an economic imagery itself based on positivist material economic interests. Therefore, even though it may be argued that Thatcherism was predominantly a domestic, economic phenomenon it may well have provided a specific framework for foreign policy. This chapter will now move on to identify the specific economic interests referred to in the case study.

## Section 3: Establishing Parameters for the Case Study

### *Section 3.1: Defining Economic Interests and explaining the Military Presence*

The following three chapters will analyse in detail the elements within Thatcherite discourse which were ultimately responsible for structuring specific ideas about the formation of British foreign policy towards the GCC States. Constructivist emphasis on ideas and discourse reveals the material economic interests that dominated the discourse of the era and the purpose of this section, therefore, is to conduct a preliminary analysis of those material interests. Britain's withdrawal from east of Suez was to become synonymous with the question of decline, as the decision to withdraw was based upon a realisation that Britain could no longer afford to retain a sizeable military presence in the Persian Gulf region. Analysis of Thatcherite discourse, however, shows an emphasis on British interests in the Persian Gulf and military decisions taken to safeguard them.

#### *Section 3.1.1: Material Economic Interests*

##### *a) Persian Gulf Oil*

In addition to destroying the prevailing belief that oil supplies were abundant, the 1973 Oil Crisis made the Persian Gulf region into one of the most important theatres in the global politico-strategic struggle for secure energy supplies. Cunningham, writing in 1988, stated that the preoccupation with the Gulf came about due to the realisation that 'to date the world's discovered reserves of oil have totalled 1,180 billion barrels of which

700 billion remain to be produced. Over 56 percent of these reserves are in the Gulf'.[123] He went on to claim that if established production patterns were to continue then there would come a time when the 'only conventional reserves of oil' were in the 'hands of the governments of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Syria and Iraq'.[124]

Despite attempts to reduce dependency on oil through diversification and alternatives, Western European States remained dependent on the Gulf, and as Levy stated, 'the world remained enormously dependent on the production policies of one key OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) country - Saudi Arabia'.[125] Key economic sectors, in Western Europe in particular, remained heavily reliant on oil and therefore any disruption to supply would have had a detrimental effect on the various economies. While Western States such as the US and Britain may have had other interests in the Persian Gulf, one of the primary objectives was to secure access to the oil reserves and exports of the Gulf States. It therefore became increasingly clear that the relationship with the Gulf States was pivotal to Western security. As Table 1 illustrates any loss of Gulf oil would have resulted in 'massive global economic and political instability'.[126]

**Table 1: World Petroleum Supplies in 1980: The "Top Ten" before the Iran-Iraq War**

| Oil Production Rank | Country | Oil Exports *MBD | Country | Oil Reserves *MBD | Country | Billions of Barrels |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | USSR | 11.7 | SA* | 9.4 | SA* | 168.0 |
| 2 | SA* | 9.9 | USSR | 3.0 | Kuwait | 67.9 |
| 3 | US | 8.6 | Iraq | 2.3 | USSR | 63.0 |
| 4 | Iraq | 2.6 | Nigeria | 1.9 | Iran | 57.5 |
| 5 | Venez'la | 2.2 | Venez'la | 1.8 | Mexico | 44.0 |
| 6 | China | 2.1 | Libya | 1.7 | Iraq | 30.0 |
| 7 | Nigeria | 2.1 | Abu Dhabi | 1.6 | Abu Dhabi | 29.0 |
| 8 | Mexico | 1.9 | Kuwait[127] | 1.5 | US | 26.4 |
| 9 | Libya | 1.8 | Indonesia | 1.2 | Libya | 23.0 |
| 10 | Kuwait | 1.7 | Iran | 1.1 | China | 20.5 |

(* Saudi Arabia, * MBD - Million Barrels per Day)
Source: Cordesman, Anthony H., *The Gulf and the search for strategic stability*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press Inc., 1984, p.4.

The table shows that five Gulf States (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Iraq, and Abu Dhabi) were in the top ten league of oil producers, thus making this region strategically, politically and economically crucial to Western Europe, Japan and the United States. It is also important to realise that Saudi Arabia alone accounted not only for nearly 25 percent of the world's proven oil reserves but also for 30 percent of the sustained oil production capacity of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).[128]

The other Gulf States, however, were also crucial in terms of their oil reserves and production capacity. Though not as wealthy or as influential as Saudi Arabia, collectively they did have roughly 50 percent of the former's production capacity and approximately 16 percent of the world's proven oil reserves. Furthermore, estimation of proven oil reserves in Kuwait was to go up in 1981 from 67.9 billion barrels to over 167 billion barrels, thus significantly increasing the importance of the region and that particular Gulf State (see endnote 49).

*b) Persian Gulf Markets*

Of course oil was not the only factor which accounted for Western (especially US and British) interests in the Persian Gulf. Apart from oil the importance of the Gulf region lay in providing a lucrative market place for Western exports, the sale of which provided much needed profits and employment in British and US industrial sectors. As a nation importing goods Saudi Arabia, for instance, ranked behind only Western European nations and the US. Although approaches to the market varied amongst Western European States, reflecting in part historical ties, many had a stake in the Gulf markets exporting both defence and civilian products, and it was clear that the market was vast. Oman was spending around 40 percent of its annual budget on defence and Saudi Arabia alone accounted for a total of 8 percent of global military spending. Amongst the Western European States with a significant stake in the Gulf markets Britain had a 'disproportionately large influence among the smaller Gulf States such as Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)'.[129] As the case study chapters will show, this interest also included Saudi Arabia and other GCC States.

Furthermore, since 1973 the West had spent vast amounts of money on the purchase of oil from the Persian Gulf. As a result, one of the primary objectives of States

such as Britain and the US was to *recycle* these sums back into Western financial markets. This is why Western States attached great importance to establishing bilateral economic links with the Gulf States. Providing programmes for infrastructural development in the Gulf countries, arms sales and other general imports into the region became one important method by which money spent on purchasing oil could be channelled back into the Western economies. As Table 2 shows, the oil revenues of all the Arab oil exporting countries were to increase substantially between 1973 and 1981, thereby indicating to the British and other Governments that the GCC States were lucrative markets.

**Table 2: Oil Revenues of Key Arab Oil Exporters: US$ billions**

| | 1964-73 | 73 | 75 | 77 | 79 | 81 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kuwait | 11.8 | 2.8 | 5.9 | 8.9 | 16.7 | 14.9 |
| SA | 16.7 | 9.0 | 29.5 | 43.3 | 62.9 | 116.2 |
| Qatar | 1.8 | 0.6 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 3.6 | 5.4 |
| UAE | 2.2 | 1.9 | 6.8 | 9.1 | 12.9 | 18.8 |
| Iraq | 7.3 | 1.9 | 7.5 | 9.6 | 21.3 | 10.4 |
| Oman | - | 0.18 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 2.2 | 4.2 |
| Bahrain | - | 0.05 | 0.29 | 0.4 | 0.53 | 3.0 |

**Source:** Taken from Ehteshami, A., 'The rise and convergence of the 'middle' in the world economy', *Global interests in the Arab Gulf*, (ed.), Davies, Charles E., University of Exeter Press, 1992, p.161.

As Ehteshami writes, the fortunes of the Gulf States have varied. Whereas Iraq (and Iran) squandered much of their revenues during the Iran-Iraq War, Kuwait was to consolidate its international holdings and significantly increase its foreign investments.[130] Since the early 1970s Kuwait had been 'an active investor in Western markets, acquiring equity holdings in some of the major corporations of the Western industrialised countries, including a substantial share in British Petroleum...[thus] equity investments account[ed] for approximately 50 percent of Kuwait's net foreign assets ... Kuwait investments in the UK alone exceeded $6 billion by 1987'.[131]

***Section 3.1.2: Threat Perceptions: Reasons for the Military Presence***

One key aspect of the period was the perception of threats to interests. Indeed, there is a mutual constitution here of threats and interests and these threats can be categorised as both *internal* and *external* to the region. As regards (a) *internal* threats the regional conflicts of the Persian Gulf were numerous and diverse. The competition between the Arabs and the Persians had been translated into a quest for dominance of the region between Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran, and the hostility between Iran and Iraq was to become open and protracted conflict in 1980 and was to last for eight years. Similarly, (b) *external* threats also dominated the way in which Britain defined its security interests as they centred on attempts to keep the GCC States free from Soviet influence, thereby containing the Soviet Union.

**a) Internal Threats: Threats emanating from within the region**

These can be defined as threats emanating from within the Persian Gulf region itself and can be broadly classified under three headings: (i) *self assertion* on the part of the Gulf States with regard to oil pricing and production levels, (ii) *revolutionary changes* within the Gulf States and (iii) *conflict* in the region, specifically the Iran-Iraq war. The consequences of these causes of instability will be introduced in the following section but will be analysed in detail from a British perspective in the case study chapters.

*i) Self assertion*

Before 1973 global energy issues did not seem to be a high priority in the West and this was probably due to the fact that at this time prices were largely determined by the efforts made by the oil companies in the exploration, investment and production of oil. Between 1945 and 1973 the oil companies set prices well below the costs of alternative fuels, thus ensuring that the international community had access to cheap and what seemed at the time to be an almost unlimited supply of oil.[132] This sense of false security brought about by adequate oil supplies not only contributed much to rapid economic expansion, but also caused an age of dependency for the industrial democracies.

However, following the oil crisis of 1973, energy issues rose to the top of the Western security agenda. This concern was to become more serious, as the crisis also demonstrated that nation states (in this case OPEC governments) had successfully seized control of their oil back from the oil companies and had become capable of setting prices unilaterally. In addition, OPEC's newly acquired power had coincided with the fact that, despite the West's declared aims of reducing oil imports, imports had actually increased and were likely to go on increasing.[133] Indeed, as figures for the US indicate, in 1947, for instance, it imported approximately 7.2 percent of its 2.1 billion barrel requirement. In 1970 this had increased to 23 percent of a 5.5 billion barrel requirement, and by 1977 there had been a further increase to a staggering 47 percent of 6.8 billion barrels.[134]

The decision by the Arab oil-producing countries to market their oil themselves rather than through the oil majors resulted in the latter's control being reduced from 60 percent in 1973 to around 30-35 percent in 1979. This switch reduced the flexibility in the world oil system, making it more difficult for the West to adjust to minor disruptions in oil supply.

Fiona Venn highlights a number of other factors for concern. She supports the view that the price escalation had a severe impact upon Western economies, which were already experiencing the onset of recession. However, she stresses the fact that 'though it was the Western nations whose problems were the more immediately apparent, the impact was global in its implications'.[135] These global effects were of particular significance since the West feared that other underdeveloped raw material producers would follow the precedent set by the oil rich states.

Despite the fact that many advocated conservation and the search for alternative fuels, Western demand for oil continued to rise, and the self assertion sweeping through OPEC capitals placed increasing pressure upon price constraint and high production levels. It became apparent that it was simply not in the interests of the Gulf States to maintain high production levels, as this would result in reduced prices. Indeed, during the 1970s, they came increasingly to the conclusion that revenues could be raised by restricting oil production.

This raised questions with regard to Western security and continued access to secure oil supplies. Bissell claims that since oil began to be mentioned as a key factor in stronger

allied security, this gave rise to the possibility that there was a strong relationship between oil and national security itself.[136] In addition, Denis Healey (Chancellor of the Exchequer of the British government until May 1979) wrote an article in *Foreign Affairs* in 1979 stating that oil producing countries had begun to think about restricting production in order to increase prices. He went on to state that 'oil is so important in so many ways that sudden changes in its price or supply can inflict great damage on the whole world economy. When change is sudden, the industrial consuming countries cannot hope to meet it by conservation alone'.[137] From this it is possible to contend that the importance of oil was such that merely relying on OPEC was insufficient to guarantee oil supplies. Indeed, certain Western nations (including Britain – see chapter 2) took action to physically safeguard oil supply routes.

David Deese lends further credibility to the importance of oil in his analysis of various conflicts since World War 1, as he states that 'Protecting the Western Alliance, preventing conflict and war, and preserving the ability to defend vital national interests with force all hinge on understanding the relationship between oil and grand strategy'.[138] He argues that oil influenced four crucial elements in the formulation of peacetime national strategy. These included the protection of vital interests through the use of force, alliance formation, the form of national force structures, and ultimately the decision whether or not to conduct international conflict.[139]

Against this background the moderation demonstrated by some pro-Western Arab Gulf States such as Saudi Arabia was seen as particularly important. As Turner stated, it was 'in the British interest to hope for Saudi authorities to continue [their] current policy of using some of their marginal production capabilities to bring some order to turbulent oil markets'.[140] This view was also expressed earlier during the onset of the 1979 oil crisis (which came about as a result of the Iranian Revolution). It was highlighted at the time that increased production by Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Venezuela and the UK had made up about half the Iranian shortfall. In the Middle East, Abu Dhabi, and the other UAE countries, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, accounted for about one-third of all the OECD imports of crude oil and natural gas, with Saudi Arabia producing about one-fifth of their total. As was stated at the time: 'if we reduce the Iran supply to its present 3 million barrels a day, the importance of the remaining states becomes apparent'.[141]

*ii) Revolutionary Changes*

Revolutionary changes in the Persian Gulf represent another set of factors which were of concern to the West in general. Any change in the political stability of the Gulf States would have meant an alteration in the status quo, and this could have seriously affected Western interests in the region as stability was crucial in order to safeguard Western economic and strategic interests. This was confirmed, in particular, after the 1973 crisis, as one of the clearest dangers inherent throughout the Persian Gulf was the incapacity of the ruling elites to establish adequate responses to the demand for political participation. These demands were compounded by the rapid modernisation which had been sweeping through the region - essentially as a result of the huge amounts of oil revenues.[142]

Another important factor in the equation was external support for the local power elites without whom, it can be argued, their duration in power would have been seriously reduced. Ayoob provided evidence of this when he analysed the 'linkage between the interests of order within the international system valued by the superpowers ... and the preservation of local privileges - economic, social and political - cherished by narrowly-based elites'.[143] He went on to argue that in the Horn of Africa (in the Soviet Union's case) and the Persian Gulf (in the US's case), the two superpowers 'firmly came down in favour of the established political order and against the demands of political and economic justice'.[144] It is in this context that the commitment to the status quo on the part of the Western States must be understood.

As OPEC became more assertive, the West felt a need to search for an alternative to the structures which had existed prior to the crisis, and the new order came to be based primarily upon the improvement of US-Saudi and US-Iranian relations. Included within this mix was the need to improve relations with the regimes of the other oil rich Gulf States such as Kuwait and Bahrain. It can be argued that the moderating influence of US-Saudi relations provided a mechanism by which the West could safeguard its interests, and this re-emphasises the importance of Saudi Arabia, which Doran identified as the state which had ultimate power within the OPEC system, as he stated that 'it alone [was] able to cause serious disruption of organisational unity by changing the rate of growth in its output'.[145]

Although Saudi Arabia could be perceived as an important member of OPEC, not all members adhered to its position on pricing and production levels, but by placing Saudi

Arabia at the centre of a series of concentric circles, Doran was able to show that those states closer to Saudi Arabia in ethnic, political and religious terms would be more likely to accept Saudi Arabia's price preferences.[146] In this sense it is possible to argue that the Gulf Sheikhdoms also adhered, albeit in varying degrees, to Saudi Arabia's own pro-Western position. It is clear that, despite differences between the Gulf States, they were like minded since they were all governed by autocratic monarchies, followed the Sunni version of Islam, and were beset by similar internal and external problems.[147] It now becomes possible to link this line of thought with the contention that by targeting this *inner circle* of OPEC States the US was able to create a degree of stability in the region, thus safeguarding Western interests.

A second factor surrounding the new order created after 1973 concerns the US, and to what extent it played an important role in supporting the status quo in the region. The US response to the crisis was important in that this may have strongly influenced the British decision to support its ally. This argument now becomes crucial, largely because of the high level of US dominance in conducting Western relations with the Gulf States.

On 17 January 1968 Britain announced that it was preparing to withdraw all its forces from 'east of Suez', at the same time ending its military and political presence in the Persian Gulf. This withdrawal left a power vacuum in the region which was quickly filled by the US after 1973.[148] From then on US policy centred around encouraging Saudi Arabia and Iran to act as surrogates and police the Gulf on behalf of the West's economic interests. American assistance (known as the Nixon Doctrine) was offered in return for local military self-reliance[149], and the Shah of Iran, for example, accepted the invitation to serve as guarantor of Gulf security, Western oil supplies and access through the straits of Hormuz, and demanded in return considerable amounts of advanced weapons systems which, according to Whettan, amounted to approximately $18 billion worth.[150] This framework for security continued until the Iranian Revolution in 1979, which significantly magnified the Western sense of insecurity in the Persian Gulf, resulting in the emergence of three serious challenges to Western policy in the region, namely the threat of a fundamentally different ideology, the attraction to Iran of fifth columnists based elsewhere in the region, and territorial claims made by revolutionary Iran.

. The 1979 demonstrations by countless Iranians in opposition to the Shah and his despotic rule were understood, in the West, to be attributable to the 'fanaticism of the

Iranian people', and to the emergence of a virulently anti-Western regime in Teheran headed by Ayatollah Khomeini.[151] Khomeini and his followers, on the other hand, as Rouleau argues, claimed that Iran's problems largely lay in US interference in Iranian politics: 'All the problems of the East stem from these foreigners, from the West, and from America at the moment. All our problems come from America. All the problems of the Moslems stem from America'.[152] It was perhaps this change in Iran that led to the disintegration of the US policy of 'employing' Iran and Saudi Arabia to 'manage' Western interests in the region.

Chaos in the oil market coincided with the instability in Iran as in 1978 strikes led to a total cut-off of Iranian oil exports, and when Iran did begin re-exporting it was at a much reduced level, leading to serious supply disruptions, particularly in Sweden and in the United Kingdom, despite the fact that North Sea oil facilities were expanding.[153] The extent of the disruption to European oil supplies also became apparent when British Petroleum and Royal Dutch/Shell had to begin cutting deliveries to third party customers.[154]

The fact that Iran decided to refuse to export oil to certain States such as Israel and South Africa suggested that politics would feature strongly in its decisions regarding oil, and this further demonstrated Saudi Arabia's importance [155] since by increasing their own oil production levels the Saudis were able to cushion the effects of the significant decrease in oil supply. The increase in European and US oil consumption levels, however, meant that the Saudi action did not provide lasting assistance. In addition, as Yergin and Stobaugh claim, the Saudis themselves were increasingly unable to influence the price and as a result were soon reluctant 'to go out on a limb against the other OPEC countries' - especially in light of the US's 'inability to control demand and reduce imports'.[156]

It was against this background of revolution in Iran that radical Iranian students, influenced by Khomeini's religious fervour, seized the American embassy in Teheran on 4 November 1978 and thus prompted a crisis which was to last for over fourteen months. Despite claims that the 'Carter administration considered the Shah to be finished and accepted the Islamic Revolution, and their common enmity to the Soviet Union made Iran and the US natural allies', the Shah's admission into the US nullified American gestures, and Khomeini urged Iranian students to 'expand [their] attacks against America and Israel with full force, and to compel the US into extraditing this criminal, deposed Shah'.[157] In this way the hostage crisis not only contributed to the deterioration in relations between Iran and

the West but also hinted at the intractable nature of instability in the Persian Gulf and the problems yet to come.

The challenges posed by Iran's revolution continued to be seen as a threat well into the 1980s, with the result that outside interests in the Persian Gulf were to be seriously affected.[158] Essentially, two different world views came into conflict with each other after the Revolution - secular Arab Gulf States versus a fundamentalist Iranian Islamic view. There was a genuine fear in Gulf States such as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain that their traditional monarchies would come under serious threat from the revolutionaries in Iran. It is widely accepted that Khomeini wanted to overthrow secular authority not only in Iran but elsewhere in the Middle East, and to replace it with theocratic systems of government.[159]

Another perceived threat in this context was the fact that the Shi'ites had traditionally been ruled as a disadvantaged class by the other major Islamic sect - the Sunnis.[160] Even in Iraq where the Shi'ites were the majority sect (52 percent of the population), they did not have political control since Sunnis occupied 80 percent of top government posts.[161] Iran, being the only Middle Eastern country to have an absolute Shi'ite majority (90 percent of the total population), therefore had the potential of providing a powerful attraction to the Shi'ites elsewhere in the Gulf. Paranoia and fear of Iranian fundamentalism among the Gulf Arab States was such that Iraq took action against *al-Dawaa*, an Iraqi Shi'ite group accused of attempting to assassinate Tariq Aziz (Iraq's Deputy Premier) in April 1980, by expelling up to 200,000 Iraqi Shi'ites, labelled as 'illegal Persian immigrants'.[162]

Further evidence of the threats posed by the change in the political structure of Iran was provided by Iranian territorial claims in the Gulf region. Most notable were its claims to the *Shatt al-Arab* (the river separating Iraq and Iran) and Bahrain. The problems between Iran and Iraq were further exacerbated by Iranian support for the Kurdish separatist movement in Iraq. The rebellion by the Kurds during the early 1970s had seriously weakened Iraq, and Iranian support for the Kurds was almost to lead to war in 1974. The Algiers Agreement, signed between Iran and Iraq on 6 March 1975, brought about a reduction in Iranian aid to Iraqi Kurds in exchange for a relocation of the frontier along the Shatt. This settlement in effect meant that a major Iranian ambition had been achieved, and

this territorial issue has often been cited as one of the reasons behind the Iraqi invasion of Iran in September 1980.[163] The other Gulf States were also well aware of the potential threats posed by revolutionary Iran. Claims to Bahrain for instance, though treated with scepticism by many analysts, have to be considered in light of the unsuccessful coup in Bahrain in December 1981. It was widely accepted that Iran was behind the attempt, and the fact that Ayatollah Rouhani (a leading member of the Iranian clergy) referred to Bahrain as Iranian in September 1979 must not be dismissed lightly.[164]

*iii) Conflict within the region – The Iran/Iraq War*

Actual and potential conflict in the region was also perceived as posing a threat to Western interests in the Persian Gulf. The Iran-Iraq war had the potential of polarising Islamic populations in the Middle East between Sunni and Shi'ite and it could have further divided the Arab world between secular states and those advocating some form of fundamental religious hegemony. Ayatollah Khomeini's success demonstrated that Islamic revolution was possible and this was 'a powerful sectarian example to the shi'ites in Bahrain, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and the Yemens'.[165] Alongside the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, the possibility of the longstanding hostility between Iran and Iraq erupting into full-scale war not only endangered the stability of the region as a whole but also, in light of the possibility of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and attacks on neutral shipping in the Gulf, posed a very real threat to both trade routes and freedom of navigation.

**b) External Threats – threats emanating from outside the region**

Particularly crucial in this context is to what extent the Soviet Union was perceived as being a threat, and the question arises whether Soviet actions (combined with internal threats) had significant policy implications for outside powers such as Britain. This is one of the factors which will feature in the case study on the discourse of the era. This section highlights the prevalent academic viewpoints, which deal predominantly with US concerns and preoccupation with the region. The fact that most literature of the period concentrates on events from a US perspective provides further proof of the lack of material addressing these topics from a British viewpoint, and the case study chapters will, therefore, further analyse this material in the context of British foreign policy and military presence in the region.

Following the Soviet invasion and the Iranian Revolution, Iraq seemed to have adopted a more moderate stance towards its Arab neighbours. Similarly, Saudi Arabia vehemently opposed Soviet encirclement of the Persian Gulf and feared that fundamentalist Iran might seek to export its revolution. As a result the British and the US were able to build upon such fears and realignments and pursue their own policies of containing the Soviet Union. The one crucial implication of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, therefore, was that it provided the context for a convergence of US, British, Iraqi and Saudi Arabian interests.

The failure of the US to maintain a direct presence in the Persian Gulf led to a 'steady erosion of the West's ability to protect oil routes'.[166] Indeed, as events in 1979 demonstrated, the power vacuum left by the US was in serious danger of being filled by the Soviet Union and its clients in the region. Two conflicting views need to be considered here. On the one hand not only did the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan appear to be the latest move towards the oil in the Persian Gulf, but the US appeared for a time incapable of adequate response.[167] On the other hand, however, it is possible to argue that the Soviet invasion was a watershed in East-West relations and that the US response reflected this.

Concern about the Soviet Union was once again growing in the United States during the final years of the 1970s, as the perception was that the Soviet Union had changed from being a continental to a global power, and from being merely concerned during the 1960s with 'immediately adjacent areas and with what came to be known as the *Socialist Commonwealth*' to dealing with obligations and commitments in more distant parts of the world. [168] Dimitri cites Kissinger's views, which indicate that the US was slipping in terms of global power and influence in the face of a Soviet advance:

> there is a historical inevitability that if present trends in the military balance are not arrested and reversed, the United States will have to take new strategic realities into account in some future international crisis and either retreat or risk confrontation from a position of perceived weakness.[169]

Indeed, apart from the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt at Camp David, prospects for US foreign policy successes in the Middle East remained bleak. As Newell stated 'from the Golan Heights to South-West China ... the ruins of US policy lay strewn across the path of potential Soviet advance'.[170] Even the Camp David treaty itself was not a total success, since it was to result in the creation of a split in the Arab world between Egypt and other Arab States firmly opposed to peace with Israel. The Arab split also provided the USSR

with opportunities to increase influence in states which were against the peace deal, and Syria, the PLO and Libya were just some of the players which formed the no-compromise front and hence became susceptible to increasing Soviet influence.

The greatest fear in the US, however, was that at the end of the 1970s the Persian Gulf had become the central focus for the Soviet Union. As Fred Halliday wrote at the time, the 'Persian Gulf is where the West was now said to have its major strategic interests ... and it was here that the full blast of the Soviet threat is stated to be most evident ... Almost as certainly as did Europe in the 1940s, the Gulf provides *the* critical source of conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union'.[171] In addition, it could be argued that Iran was perceived by US political leaders to be a likely region outside Europe where there was the possibility of a conflict with the Soviet Union.

Consistent Soviet interest in the Middle East traditionally centred around two factors, the proximity of the Middle East to the USSR and the Suez Canal, and the region's extensive resources.[172] In addition to ensuring Soviet interest in the Middle East, these factors meant that Superpower rivalry became more intense, culminating in the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan and its attempts to gain influence in Iran after the 1979 Revolution.

One view amongst some Western countries (the US and Britain for instance) at the time of the invasion was that this represented a decisive Soviet move towards a warm water port, and also an attempt to control Persian Gulf wealth and Western oil and trade sea lanes.[173] There were those who argued, however, that 'concern about the Soviet threat appeared to be based upon questionable assumptions and sometimes facts; taking individual events out of their local and historical contexts; ignoring the limits of Soviet power and the setbacks encountered by Moscow'.[174] As regards other possible motives, Valenta argues that Islamic fundamentalism was a major concern in the Soviet Union, especially in light of the Iranian Revolution, combined with the fact that over 50 million of the Soviet Union's own population was Muslim.[175]

Western fears were also heightened by the fact that the future oil-export market would increasingly be dominated by fewer and fewer nations primarily centred in the Persian Gulf.[176] Although the Soviet Union had been a net exporter of oil and self sufficient in meeting its own energy requirements there was a 'growing disjunction between the

location of fuel reserves and major areas of consumption'.[177] The fact that the 'availability of easily extracted resources located in the Western part of the USSR was rapidly diminishing', combined with the fact that most of the Soviet Union's resources were increasingly 'concentrated in inhospitable areas of Siberia and Central Asia' meant that the Soviet Union stood at the edge of becoming a net importer of energy.[178] These prospects were full of serious implications since, as Cobb stated, 'the entrance of the Soviet Union into competition for the world's increasingly scarce energy resources was likely to significantly alter Soviet strategic policies, particularly with respect to the oil-rich Persian Gulf', thus raising the possibility of direct confrontation with the West.[179]

Whatever the Soviet motives behind the invasion, accounts seemed to suggest that there was a real threat to the Persian Gulf, and that there was evidence to show a 'persistent and systematic Soviet effort to spread her influence southward'.[180] Various events during the 1970s had tripped the alarm about the growth of Soviet power,[181] and fear of Soviet adventures had been increasing since their support for Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia. The Soviet-Cuban intervention in Angola, influence in Ethiopia and Somalia, the invasion of Afghanistan and lastly Soviet attempts to gain a foothold in Iran, all pointed towards the possibility of confrontation and a perceived Soviet desire to encircle the Persian Gulf.

The timing of the Iranian Revolution was also of central importance in relation to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the West's concern regarding stability in the Persian Gulf. Events seemed to indicate that the Soviet Union believed that the revolution had provided them with an opportunity to increase influence in Iran as, in line with their support for revolutionary movements, they welcomed the undermining of the Shah's pro-Western stance. They saw this as a development which was likely to make Iran more susceptible to Soviet overtures and believed that the weakened US position would be a gain for them.[182] Although it later became clear that the new Iranian regime was as hostile towards the Soviet Union as it was towards the US, it must be remembered that the loss of US influence in Iran, combined with Soviet overtures towards Iran's new rulers, reinforced the fear in the West of Soviet attempts to extend its influence southwards, which would have brought it to the Gulf's doorstep.

## Section 4: The British Response: an introduction to the discourse

The above analysis has provided a general introduction to the elements which subsequently define the parameters of the case study. The extent to which these elements influenced British foreign policy towards the GCC States will be analysed later in the case study but it may be worthwhile, by way of an introduction, to identify some central factors of the British response. This analysis confirms the connection between ideational and material structures as specified by constructivist theory in that Thatcherite discourse was dominated by economic interests and this consequently provided some form of structure to the British response.

The history of British foreign policy had been one of attempting to reconcile the differences between the resources available and the wide range of commitments. Defence had become closely associated with the Thatcher administration and all too often took centre stage during the election campaigns. Thatcher was seen as adopting a particularly robust view on maintaining defence capabilities and, as Freedman states, this often meant that she was 'twinned with Ronald Reagan as the architect of the more hard-line policies adopted by West during the 1980s'.[183]

Jones confirms that defence as an issue influenced voting behaviour during the election both in 1979 and 1983, and this further suggests that the inter-party consensus which had dominated defence issues since 1945 had indeed broken down. Although there were significant differences between the main parties over specific defence issues '...what was not at issue either between the parties or amongst the electorate as a whole was a strong and positive commitment to the broad objectives of British defence policy ...[which] was to be, on the one hand, opposed to the Soviet Union and, on the other, Atlanticist and particularly pro-American, pro-Nato, pro-nuclear and ... predominantly orientated towards Europe'.[184]

The advent of Thatcherism signalled a debate over defence issues, and despite the emphasis on the maintenance of strong defence, the discourse reveals a certain tension in this field in light of the limited resources available. As Freedman states, despite the commitment to a 3 percent growth in the defence budget in the early 1980s the Government 'still found it necessary to take hard decisions on defence priorities. After a

sharp debate in the spring of 1981, the Secretary of State announced a revised defence programme that came out in favour of sustaining the British Army of the Rhine at the expense of the maritime contribution...'[185]

In 1979 the new Conservative Government had appeared to stress a renewed interest in military involvement outside the Nato area and as a consequence devoted space in its first Defence Estimates to the question of greater intervention capabilities. As Freedman states 'In February 1981, the Prime Minister even appeared to promise substantial involvement in the Rapid Deployment Force planned in the United States'.[186] The Defence Estimates of the following month, however, played down the issue, stressing that 'Reinstatement of the former British presence East of Suez is no longer either a political or economic possibility ... Resource constraints and our primary responsibility to Nato rule out any idea of creating a substantial standing intervention force'.[187]

The 1981 Defence Review, (*Cmnd 8288* – 'The Way Forward'), confirmed that a reduction in defence commitments was necessary in light of the economic situation and as a consequence 'resisted the temptation to expand Britain's defence commitments overseas. This ensured that the budgeting problem if faced was not exacerbated ... and in June 1981, it was decided that there was to be a reduction in the numbers of destroyers and frigates'.[188] Capitanchik confirms that the Government was concerned to hold military expenditure in check. In analysing the 1981 Defence Review he states

> In 1980, when costs seemed to be running out of hand, it actually imposed a moratorium in defence spending. In 1981, Mr. Nott's "The Way Forward", although devised mainly with an eye to allocations within defence, implicitly recognised that defence should stand on the same footing as any other major item in the government's spending programme. It acknowledged cash limits and the need to check cost escalation. In other words, the Conservative Government ... has no intention of mounting a defence effort incompatible with the resources available.[189]

In light of the Government's decision to reduce defence expenditure, the question of the British military presence in the Persian Gulf arises. As chapter 2 will indicate, Britain retained a naval force (the Armilla Patrol) in the region throughout the 1980s, in addition to numerous naval visits and tri-service exercises conducted with local Gulf State forces.

Furthermore, as chapter 4 will demonstrate, the trend to deploy sizeable tri-service forces to the region continued in light of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The maintenance of a military presence in the region therefore indicates that, despite the overall restructuring of defence priorities, certain commitments (such as contributing to the stability of this particular region) were added to the list, thus providing some basis for the claim that the region was of importance to Britain.

In addition to the deployment of the Armilla Patrol the British Government was forced to reconsider central elements outlined in "The Way Forward" in light of the Falklands War, which reopened the debate on the future defence position and enabled the Navy in particular to restate its case, namely, the restoration of its extra-Nato dimension.[190] The war also encouraged a 'revisionist' critique which argued that a way had to be found to maintain and even enhance the surface fleet; '...the unexpected nature of this war and the reliance on the service that the Government was about to run down inevitably led to accusations of strategic myopia. The Falklands war was presented as a lesson in the "nick of time", before the senior service was rendered wholly incapable of coping with such eventualities'.[191] As chapter 2 will demonstrate, important decisions taken by John Nott in 1981, such as the one to scrap HMS Intrepid and Fearless (which made up a significant portion of Britain's amphibious capabilities) were reversed. As Freedman states, 'Nott's successor at the Defence Ministry, Michael Heseltine, in 1983 and 1984 presided over a steady retreat from some of the harsher judgements of 1981'.[192]

The Government itself acknowledged the case for some revision as Heseltine, Defence Secretary after John Nott, stated:

> The Falklands campaign showed that we must be prepared for the unforeseen and that we must be ready to defend our vital interests outside the Nato area. We have already announced – in the Falklands White Paper – a number of improvements in the ability of our forces to operate outside Europe, such as the purchase of a fleet of Tristar strategic tankers and the upgrading of our out-of-area formation, 5 Infantry Brigade.[193]

It can be argued, however, that Britain's action in defending the Falklands went against the general trend of withdrawing from overseas commitments, and that the war did not represent a policy of general military intervention overseas. Despite this, however, the Gulf naval deployments were clearly the most sustained British involvement in an out-of-

area region during the 1980s and consequently this raises the question of whether this involvement itself was an aberration and against the general trend of reducing overseas commitments. This question arises again following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent sizeable British increase in its military presence, this time of a tri-service nature, but aberration or not, the emphasis on economic interests in the GCC States revealed by the discourse of the era seems to indicate that some type of response was likely.

**Section 5: Sources defining the Thatcherite Discourse**

There is to date no secondary source literature which specifically analyses British foreign policy towards the Persian Gulf during the Thatcher period. For this reason, although secondary sources such as books and articles have answered many questions, it has been necessary to construct an argument based predominantly on primary sources in five specific categories, namely, the *British Government's Official Record, Commons Select Committee Reports, Command Papers, United Nations Documents* and *Personal Interviews* with selected officials. Research of the *Official Record (Hansard)* has been particularly detailed, spanning the entire Thatcher period. This not only provided an insight into Government policy towards the Persian Gulf, but also highlighted important statements by central politicians throughout the period in question. Research of this particular source has also identified individuals who played a leading role in the formation of policy towards the region and aided in the interview selection process.

*Commons Select Committee Reports* have formed the second tier of primary sources and in themselves have provided a more detailed assessment of relevant issues. They have been particularly useful in gaining an insight into issues such as Government policy during the Iran/Iraq war, policy with regard to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, analysis into questions of economic decline, Anglo-Soviet relations, policy following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, defence implications of the improvement in East-West relations and issues relating to out-of-area operations. A comprehensive list of the Select Committee Reports used is provided in the bibliography.

The third set of Official British Government Publications have been the *Command Papers* which are actual Government statements of policy and act as replies to specific Commons Select Committee investigations. These have, therefore, been especially useful in providing information on Government policy in cases where the Select Committees have been unable to provide detailed conclusions. These Papers cover the whole range of government, but in the case of this thesis a narrower range concerned with relevant issues such as out-of-area operations, expenditure plans, and various facets of defence policy have been consulted. As in the case of the *Select Committee Reports* details of the relevant *Command Papers* have been provided in the bibliography.

Fourthly, *Personal Interviews* with specific individuals have been conducted and these have been for the express purpose of either confirming or disputing the findings of other forms of research. Interviewees have included Lord Douglas Hurd, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs during the first Thatcher Administration and subsequently Secretary of State in the same Department during the crisis following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

A second interviewee was Sir Alan Munro, who was Head of the Middle East Department in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1979. Sir Alan Munro's period in office spanned the change in Administration which brought Mrs. Thatcher to power and he was, therefore, particularly useful in highlighting the difference in emphasis towards the Persian Gulf region between the two Governments. In addition, Sir Alan Munro was the Regional Marketing Director (Middle East) affiliated to the Ministry of Defence between 1981-1983 and was therefore able to shed light on the importance of the GCC States as markets for British defence equipment.

Similarly, Stephen Day, as Ambassador to Qatar (1981-1984) and Head of the Middle East Department (1984-1986), was able to provide useful information concerning the importance of the GCC States in economic terms. Furthermore, his (and Sir Alan Munro's) comments on the Iranian Revolution were particularly useful in understanding the extent to which the Government viewed the consequences as disastrous for the stability of the region. Although Sir Frank Cooper (Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence, 1976-1982) appeared less convinced of the value of British exports to the Persian Gulf region he nevertheless confirmed Mrs. Thatcher's high profile in

advocating stability in the region and encouraging British companies to sell their products there.

Sir Colin Chandler (Head of Defence Sales, Ministry of Defence, 1985-1989) was the central player in negotiating the *Al Yamamah* contracts with Saudi Arabian officials and interviewing him was particularly important as the information he provided confirmed Britain's economic pre-occupation with the GCC States, and in particular with Saudi Arabia. As its largest ever defence contract Al Yamamah ensured that Britain retained an important role in Saudi defence procurement plans, and provided a base for political and military co-operation with Saudi Arabia during the second Gulf War.

Sir Derek Boorman (Chief of Defence Intelligence and Deputy Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Chiefs, 1985-1988) was able to highlight the importance which Mrs. Thatcher attached to intelligence reports concerning the threat posed by Iraq to the stability of the region. Furthermore, Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine and Group Captain A.P.N. Lambert were able to provide detailed information on the conduct of operations against Iraq itself. Sir Patrick Hine as the then Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, United Kingdom Air Forces, was well placed to gain an insight into Mrs. Thatcher's perceptions and attitudes towards the invasion. During the interview he confirmed that Mrs. Thatcher had been instrumental in persuading President Bush that something purposeful had to be done in confronting the Iraqi threat. Furthermore, David Nicholls, as the Assistant Sec. Gen. for Defence Planning and Policy, NATO, 1980-1984, and Deputy Under-Secretary of State (Policy), Ministry of Defence, 1984-1989, not only threw light on the international factors surrounding Britain's decision to support the coalition, but also indicated the extent of divisions between Departments over the extent and reasons for British action in the Gulf.

Finally Dr. David Kay was, at the time, Head of the Evaluation section of the International Atomic Energy Agency and during this time he led a number of inspections of Iraq's nuclear weapons programme. Furthermore Colonel Terence Taylor had been one of the 21 inspectors connected with the United Nations Special Commission between 1992-1995 and had also been a Chief Inspector. Both were able to highlight the importance which the coalition (in particular Britain and the United States) attached to the ongoing monitoring and verification process of Iraq's industrial capabilities.

The final set of primary sources used have been United Nations Documents. In particular the speeches made by the British Permanent Representative, Sir David Hannay, during the Security Council Debates have been crucial in highlighting the Government's official stance towards Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Access to Security Council Closed Documents was also possible following requests to the Dag Hammarskjöld Library at the United Nations. A series of Closed Sessions (defined as debates away from Press scrutiny) were held during the conflict against Iraq and were strongly supported by Britain. The debates included speeches by Sir David Hannay which confirmed the importance attached by the Government to Iraq's unconditional withdrawal. Details of United Nations Documents have also been provided in the bibliography.

Of course, primary sources are crucial in establishing firm conclusions on policy, however, secondary sources inevitably form part of the discourse of a particular historical period and so have been used extensively to support the central arguments. Articles, books and newspaper reports (details of which are in the bibliography) have been particularly useful in understanding some of the general academic debates surrounding important issues concerning the Persian Gulf. The importance of the GCC States in terms of oil and markets for western products in general has been established using secondary sources. Primary sources have then been used to confirm or dispute elements of the hypothesis in the case study itself. Other issues such as the general consequences of the Iranian revolution, the Iran/Iraq War and the Soviet threat to Western (in general) interests in the Persian Gulf following its invasion of Afghanistan have also relied heavily on secondary sources. Such issues have formed the basis for subsequent analysis of British foreign policy towards the region.

**Conclusion**

The hypothesis laid down in this chapter has been that the central elements of Thatcherism created a framework for approaching foreign policy, and that the nature of British foreign policy during the Thatcher era was constructed by the positivist discourse of economic interests. This statement has led to the establishment of a central question for this thesis, namely, to what extent were material economic interests responsible for

the formation of British foreign policy towards the GCC States during the period 1979-1991?[194] Consequently, much of the chapter has been concerned with explaining the factors behind this statement. Closely linked to this has been the crucial observation that the research into Thatcherite discourse has shown economic emphasis and imagery to be dominant, and this has been instrumental in the decision to adopt constructivist theory as the basis for analysis at the expense of other mainstream theories such as neo-realism or neo-liberal institutionalism.

As a consequence, the chapter began with a general survey of the main debates in international relations theory, the first of which, that between the realists and idealists (otherwise known as utopianists), focused on the nature of man, with realists seeing the world as it was and the latter as they wished it to be. The dominance of classical realism came about as a result of international events as World War Two and the ensuing Cold War ensured that state-centric explanations and a focus on power politics took centre stage. It is this emphasis on security, state-centricity, the relegation of domestic processes and the inability to analyse the role played by ideas in the construction of national interests which placed limitations on realist thought as a basis upon which to analyse the thesis. Many of the subsequent theoretical approaches since the establishment of realism as orthodoxy were concerned with challenging realist dominance. Keohane and Nye with their "complex interdependence", for instance, sought to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of state-centric explanations by advocating multiple access channels, interdependence and transnationalism.

The debates since the 1970s, the neo-realists and the neo-liberal institutionalists over the question of extent of co-operation under anarchy, the structuralists in Michael Banks' inter-paradigm debate and Lapid's characterisation of the third debate as a discourse about the nature of analytical frameworks, namely positivism against post-positivism have shown the rich yet confusing nature of the discipline's development. This chapter raised the question of why, for instance, structuralist approaches with their emphasis on economic relations within and among states were rejected as a basis for the thesis. Structuralism's focus on economics at the expense of other factors ultimately meant it had to be discounted as a basis for the thesis since, despite the emphasis on economics in the Thatcherite discourse, a deconstruction would inevitably lead to the

identification of alternative factors contributing to an explanation of British foreign policy. The issue concerning the deconstruction of the disourse will be further analysed in the final conclusion to the thesis.

The debate between positivist and post-positivist theories is of particular relevance when trying to categorise constructivism. Positivism, with its unified view of science and adoption of methodologies of the natural sciences, has tended to dominate international relations since the discipline's emergence. Debate over epistemology itself was stifled in the face of an acceptance of positivist assumptions by all mainstream theories, and this in turn gave the impression that the debates between realism and idealism and the inter-paradigm debate were merely debates between different versions of the international system rather than genuine alternative views.

The arrival of post-positivist thought, however, stimulated epistemological and ontological debate as first critical theory and then post-modernism sought to reject rationalist meta-narratives such as realism, Marxism, neo-realism and even neo-liberal institutionalism. The distinction between the "explainers" and the "understanders" was firmly established as constructivism began to make significant inroads into the discipline. There were numerous debates during the 1980s, including the debate between the neo-realists and the neo-liberal institutionalists, both of whom sought to apply the logic of rationalist economic theory to international relations. But this period also saw other debates such as between the interpretivists (for instance critical theorists) and rationalists where the former challenged the very foundations of rationalism and the latter accused the former of having little to say about 'real world' international relations.

The discussion between the interpretivists and rationalists soon evolved, however, to incorporate the emerging constructivists who challenged both the rationalism of mainstream theories and the overly meta-theoretical emphasis of early critical theory. It is in this context that constructivism increasingly claimed the "middle ground" between the rationalist and interpretive approaches with a further qualification that it is a broad theoretical approach spanning positivist and post-positivist frameworks. It was in this light, therefore, that the chapter analysed the key principles of social constructivism with the claim that its intersubjective character and its emphasis on ideas, language and

discourse make this theoretical approach ideal for conducting and analysis of the Thatcher era.

Constructivism's roots in critical theory provide it with reflective and interpretive characteristics while at the same time its acceptance of certain positivist principles has meant that it is a suitable vehicle for conducting empirical research on international relations issues. It sees international relations as being socially constructed by the identity, meanings and the assumptions of the actors themselves. In order to explain this aspect further, the chapter has compared constructivist principles with those of neo-realism and neo-liberal institutionalism. Like neo-realism, constructivism accepts that structures are able to constrain the behaviour of agents or units, but whereas neo-realism emphasises material structures only, constructivism argues that systems of ideas, shared beliefs and values also have structural characteristics. It does not dismiss material structures and it accepts that both ideational and material structures have a role to play in constraining behaviour, but for constructivists how the material environment is interpreted depends upon the systems of meanings that are constructed by the actors. In this sense anarchy is indeed what states make of it, and therefore even the neo-liberal institutionalist position that the effects of anarchy can be mitigated against through increased levels of co-operation can be surpassed. Constructivism, therefore, clearly goes beyond the rationalist accounts.

This emphasis on discourse, language and ideas has profound implications for this thesis in the context of the central questions being asked and the statement of hypothesis. Firstly, in light of the claim that Thatcherite discourse was characterised by economic imagery, the language of the research material itself now plays a crucial role. Secondly, the chapter has analysed the phenomenon known as "Thatcherism", and claimed that despite the problems with definition it is possible to identify core elements of the belief system which were based upon interests, economics and incentives. It is this rationalist, material element within Thatcherism which then constitutes the discourse of the era itself and in turn gives rise to a framework for foreign policy. Finally it is the analysis of the discourse which ultimately leads the observer to draw conclusions on the central question - i.e. the extent to which economics influenced the formation of British foreign policy.

The chapter has also established parameters for the case study which will revolve around a detailed analysis of the Thatcherite discourse itself, and has analysed the dynamics of the Persian Gulf region in an attempt to isolate certain issues which will be relevant to the case study. These include both an explanation of the material interests that outside powers had in the Persian Gulf region and of the threats besetting the region. Material interests are explained in the context of the peculiarity of the Gulf States themselves, their oil exports and the fact that they represented a lucrative market for Western defence and other exports. Similarly, threat perceptions are characterised in terms of revolutionary changes, self assertion and the threat posed by the Soviet Union. This analysis stemmed from some of the secondary source material which, in the context of the intersubjective nature of constructivism, is also part of the discourse and therefore cannot be ignored.

The claim that the conclusions are to be found within the discourse itself leads to the assumption here that the image of the GCC States as lucrative markets and as strategically important oil exporters would contribute to the formation of a framework for policy. Constructivist emphasis on discourse remains an important factor in attempting to determine what that policy may have been and so the chapter has also considered some of the questions relating to the defence of the region and Britain's out of area military presence.

Defence was to become closely associated with the Thatcher Administration and whilst appearing to adopt a policy towards maintaining strong defence capabilities, the Conservatives after 1979 came up against the age old problem of reconciling the differences between the resources available and the wide range of commitments. Although the harsher pronouncements of the 1981 Defence review may have been reversed following the Falklands crisis, the trend during the 1980s remained towards working within increasingly limited defence budgets, and this undoubtedly had an effect on Britain's out-of-area capabilities. It is in this light, therefore, that the British action in the Falklands could be labelled as an aberration that went against the general trend. However, one must not ignore the fact that the Armilla Patrol was the most sustained British out-of-area involvement during the 1980s, and that it eventually led to Britain contributing the second largest force to the international coalition against Iraq.

The following case study, therefore, adopts the constructivist principles highlighted in this chapter to conduct a detailed analysis of Thatcherite discourse and the issues that the Government discussed vis-à-vis the GCC States. Ultimately it will be necessary to return to an examination of the hypothesis statement and ask whether Thatcherite discourse reveals enough to either prove or disprove it. In light of this goal it will also be necessary to ask some questions about constructivism itself, specifically whether it enables the observer to identify alternative explanations for British policy towards the region or whether the discourse is clear enough to endorse the possibility that economics did indeed shape that policy.

## Notes

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1 The Gulf Co-operation Council consists of six Gulf States, namely: Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

2 See for example Byres, R.B. and Leyton-Brown, D. (eds.), *Superpower intervention in the Persian Gulf*, 1982; Bennett, W. Lance and Paletz, David, L. (eds.) *Taken by storm: the media, public opinion, and U.S. foreign policy in the Gulf War*, 1994; Kelly, J. B. *Arabia, the Gulf, and the West*, 1980, and Smith, Jean E., *George Bush's war*, 1992.

3 Sir Richard Scott, *Return to an address of the Honourable of the House of Commons dated 15 February 1996 for the report of the inquiry into the export of defence equipment and dual-use goods to Iraq and related prosecutions*, volumes 1-6, 15 February 1996.

4 For a detailed account on Britain's motives in exporting defence equipment to Iran and Iraq and the role played by Government Ministries, see, Miller, D., *Export or die: Britain's defence trade with Iran and Iraq*, London, Cassell, 1996.

5 See for example Terriff, Terry, et al, *Security studies today*, Oxford, Polity Press, 1999, p.11. Here the authors highlight the disputed origins of the discipline of IR itself. Even though they agree that each of the so-called starting dates for IR is associated with the nature of a war and its conclusion there remains no agreement as to the starting date itself and refer to three possibilities based on the Peloponnesian War, the Thirty Years War and World War One.

6 Amongst the numerous accounts on this first debate are the original texts by Hans Morgenthau and E.H. Carr, *Politics among Nations* and *The Twenty Years Crisis*, London, Papermac, (reprint) 1981 respectively. See also Griffiths, Martin, *Realism, idealism and international politics: a reinterpretation*, New York, Routledge, 1992.

7 Buzan, Barry, 'The timeless wisdom of realism', in *International theory: positivism and beyond*, (eds.), Steve Smith et al, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.47.

8 Doyle, Michael, W. and Ikenberry, G.John, 'Introduction' in *New thinking in International Relations theory*, Doyle and Ikenberry (eds.), Oxford, Westview Press, 1997, p.10.

9 Ibid, p.11.

10 This realist view that states can act as unitary actors whilst remaining unaffected by domestic institutional constraints is both debatable and controversial. Scholars such as Stephan Krasner

have concluded that even relatively "weak" states interacting with a "strong" American society can act with a high degree of autonomy. See for instance, Krasner, Stephan, 'United States commercial policy: unravelling the paradox of external strength and internal weakness', in *Between power and plenty: foreign economic policies of advanced industrial states* edited by Peter Katzenstein, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, pp.51-87.

11 Stausz-Hupe, Robert and Possony, Stefan T., *International Relations*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1954, pp.5-6. See also Morgenthau, Hans, *Politics among nations: the struggle for power and peace*, New York, Knopf, 1948, pp.25-26.

12 See Grieco, Joseph M., 'Realist international theory and the study of world politics', in Doyle and Ikenberry, op.cit., p.166 for an elaboration of this point.

13 As excellent analysis of political realism has been provided by Roger D. Spegele in his book *Political Realism in international theory*, Cambridge University Press, 1996. Here Spegele attempts to address some of the criticisms levelled at Realist theory by providing a revised vision. In doing so, however, he addresses the core principles embodied within classical realism.

14 Terriff et al, op.cit., p.13.

15 Smith, Steve and Smith, Michael, 'The analytical background', in Michael Smith et al (eds.), *British foreign policy: tradition, change and transformation*, London, Unwin Hyman, 1988, pp.12-13.

16 Ibid, p.5.

17 Idem.

18 Ibid, p.13.

19 See for instance, Keohane, Robert O. and Nye, Joseph, *Power and interdependence: world politics in transition*, Boston, Little, Brown, 1977; Keohane, Robert O. and Nye, Joseph, 'Transgovernmental relations and international organisations', *World Politics*, vol.27, no.1, October 1974.

20 Ruggie, John Gerard, 'International regimes, transactions and change: embedded liberalism in the post-war economic order', *International Organisation*, vol.36, no.2, Spring 1982, p.382.

21 See Keohane and Nye, 1977, op.cit, pp.225-232.

22 Terriff et al, op.cit, p.14. Also see Banks, Michael, 'the inter-paradigm debate', in *International Relations; a handbook of current theory*, by Margot Light and A.J.R. Groom, (eds.), London, Pinter Publishers, 1989, pp.7-20.

23 Burchill, S. et al, *Theories of international relations*, New York, Palgrave, 2001, p.209.

24 Hollis, Martin and Smith, Steve, *Explaining and understanding international relations*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991, pp.36-37.

25 Ibid, p.105. See in particular Waltz's own account on Reductionist and Systemic theories in *Theory of international politics*, London, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979, pp.60-78.

26 Idem.

27 See Waltz, op.cit., chapter 5 on 'Political Structures'.

28 Dougherty, James E. and Pfaltzgraff, Robert E., *Contending theories of international relations: a comprehensive survey*, 3rd edition, New York, HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1990, p.120.

29 Burchill, op.cit, p.211.

30 For both quotes see Axelrod, Robert and Keohane, Robert, 'Achieving co-operation under anarchy: strategies and institutions', in *Co-operation under anarchy*, edited by Kenneth A. Oye, Princeton University Press, 1986, p.226.

[31] Axelrod, Robert and Keohane, Robert, 'Achieving co-operation under anarchy: strategies and institutions', in Baldwin, David A. (ed.), *Neo-realism and neo-liberalism: the contemporary debate*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1993, p.4.

[32] Stein, Arthur, 'Co-ordination and collaboration: regimes in an anarchic world', in Ibid, p.29.

[33] Lipson, Charles, 'International co-operation in economic and security affairs', in Ibid, p.80.

[34] Milner, Helen, 'The assumption of anarchy in international relations theory: a critique', in Ibid, p.146. Also see Keohane, Robert O. (ed.), *Neo-realism and its critics*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1986 for additional aspects to the debate.

[35] Waever, Ole, 'Rise and fall of the inter-paradigm debate', in Steve Smith et al, 1996, p.150.

[36] See for example Wallerstein, Immanuel, 'The rise and demise of the world capitalist system', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol.16, no.4, 1974. See also Hobden, Steve and Wyn Jones, Richard 'World-system theory', in Baylis, John and Smith, Steve (eds.), *The globalisation of world politics: an introduction to international relations*, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp.126-145 for a useful summary of Structuralist approaches.

[37] Steans, Jill and Pettiford, Lloyd, *International relations: perspectives and themes*, London, Pearson Education Limited, 2001, p.72.

[38] Smith, *International Theory*, 1996, op.cit, p.11.

[39] Spegele, op.cit, p.7.

[40] Smith, *International Theory*, 1996, op.cit, p.11.

[41] Idem.

[42] Idem.

[43] For a very useful summary on the history of positivism and alternative epistemologies see Smith, ibid., pp.14-25. Here Smith talks of the shortcomings of positivist assumptions along with attempting to account for various epistemologies such as empiricism, rationalism and pragmatism.

[44] Analysed further by Burchill, S., 'Realism and neo-realism', in Burchill et al, op.cit, p.78.

[45] Ibid, p.13.

[46] For an expansion of this point see Hollis and Smith, *Explaining and understanding international relations*, op.cit., pp.44-91. The quote is from Dessler, David, 'Constructivism within a positivist social science', Review of International Studies, vol.25, 1999, p.124.

[47] Burchill, op.cit., p.14.

[48] Dessler, op.cit., p.124.

[49] All quotes from Burchill, op.cit., p.209.

[50] Idem. Burchill argues that critical theory evolved through a series of stages or "waves" as he puts it. During the first wave he argues 'Critical ... theorists roamed broadly over epistemological, normative, ontological, and methodological concerns, and their energies were devoted primarily to demolishing the philosophical foundations of the rationalist project'. Idem, p.214.

[51] Adler, Emanuel, 'Seizing the middle ground: constructivism in world politics', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol.3, no.3, 1997, p.319.

[52] Price, Richard and Reus-Smit, 'Dangerous liaisons? Critical international theory and constructivism', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol.4, no.3, 1998, p.263.

[53] Ibid, p.261.

[54] Steans and Pettiford, op.cit., p.127.

[55] Adler, op.cit., p.320. Adler further argues that the core of the debate in International Relations and within Social Constructivism is not about scientific versus literary interpretation but about the 'nature of social science itself and therefore, of the discipline of International Relations'.

[56] Here Dessler refers to John Ruggie, Alexander Wendt and Peter Katzenstein in particular. Of Katzenstein's edited volume Dessler writes that 'one of the distinguishing features ... is the authors' firm commitment to mainstream research in the study of world politics ... [and though] they don't use the term positivism ... they fully endorse the practices of what they call 'mainstream', 'conventional', or 'normal' science'. Dessler, op.cit., p.124.

[57] Price and Reus-Smit, op.cit., p.260.

[58] Wendt, A., 'Constructing international politics', *International Security*, vol.20, no.1, Summer 1995, pp.71-72.

[59] Dessler, op.cit., p.123.

[60] Burchill et al, op.cit., p.217.

[61] Wendt, A., 'Constructing international politics', op.cit., p.73.

[62] Both quotes from Hopf, Ted, 'The promise of constructivism in international relations theory', *International Security*, vol.23, no.1, Summer 1998, p.177.

[63] Wendt, A., 'Constructing international politics', op.cit., p.74.

[64] Yee, Albert S., 'The causal effects of ideas on policies', *International Organisation*, vol.50, no.1, Winter 1996, p.69.

[65] Hopf., op.cit., p.175.

[66] Idem.

[67] Arfi, Badredine, 'Ethnic fear: the social construction of insecurity', *Security Studies*, vol.8, no.1, Autumn 1998, p.152.

[68] Burchill, op.cit., p.217.

[69] Wendt, A., 'Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics', *International Organisation*, vol.46, no.2, Spring 1992, p.393.

[70] Weldes, Jutta, 'Constructing national interests', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol.2, no.3, 1996, pp.277-278.

[71] Ibid, p.278-279.

[72] Idem.

[73] Wendt, 'Anarchy is what states make of it ...', pp.396-397.

[74] Dunne, Timothy, 'The social construction of international society', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol.1, no.3, 1995, pp.373-374.

[75] Burchill et al, op.cit., p.218

[76] For a more detailed discussion of the agent-structure debate see for instance, Hollis, Martin and Smith, Steve, 'Two stories about structure and agency', *Review of International Studies*, vol.20, no.3, 1994, pp.241-276 and Dessler, David, 'What's at stake in the agent-structure debate?', *International Organisation*, vol.43, no.3, 1989, p.443.

[77] Doty, Roxanne, 'Aporaia: a critical exploration of the agent-structure problematique in international relations theory', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol.3, no.3, 1997, p.372.

[78] A phrase coined by Wendt in a crucial article, see endnote 70 for bibliographic details.

[79] Ruggie, John, G., *Constructing the world polity; essays on international institutionalisation*, Routledge, London, 1998, p.3.

[80] Ibid., p.4.

[81] McSweeney, 'Identity and security: Buzan and the Copenhagen School', *Review of International Studies*, vol.22, no.1, January 1996, p.85.

[82] Ruggie, op.cit., pp.33-34.

[83] Goldstein, Judith and Keohane, Robert, 'Ideas and foreign policy: an analytical framework', in Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane (ed.), *Ideas and foreign policy: beliefs, institutions, and political change*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1993, pp.8-12.

[84] Weldes, op.cit., p.284.

[85] Hall, Stuart, and Jacques, Martin, *The politics of Thatcherism*, London, Lawrence and Wishart Limited, 1987, p.41.

[86] Rowthorn, B., 'The past strikes back', in ibid., pp.66-68.

[87] Ibid., p.69.

[88] Both quotes from Hall and Jacques op.cit., p.43.

[89] Ibid., p.46.

[90] Ibid., p.50.

[91] For more information on the Suez Crisis see Epstein, L.D., *British politics in the Suez crisis*, London, Pall Mall, 1964; Carlton, D., *Britain and the Suez crisis*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1988; Owen, R. and Louis R., (eds.), *Suez, 1956: the crisis and its consequences*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1989, and Gorst, Anthony, *The Suez crisis*, London, Routledge, 1997.

[92] Sharp, Paul, *Thatcher's diplomacy: the revival of British foreign policy*, London, The Macmillan Press Ltd., p.1.

[93] Ibid., pp.2-3.

[94] Ibid., p.5.

[95] Ibid., p.8.

[96] Ibid., p.11. A detailed discussion on the fragmentation and ultimate demise of the British Empire is beyond the remit of this thesis, as is the withdrawal from east of Suez. For more information on these and related topics see the following: Howard, M., '1945-1995: Reflections on half a century of British security policy', *International Affairs*, vol.71, no.4, 1995; Northedge, F.S., *Descent from power: British foreign policy: 1945-1973*, London, Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1974; Jones, R.E., *The changing structure of British foreign policy*, London, Longman, 1974, and Balfour-Paul, Glen, *The end of empire in the Middle East: Britain's relinquishment of power in her last three Arab dependencies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991.

[97] Kavanagh, D., *Thatcherism and British politics: the end of consensus?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1987, p.1.

[98] Riddell, P., *The Thatcher Government*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1987, pp.2-3.

[99] Jenkins, P., *Mrs. Thatcher's revolution: the ending of the Socialist era*, London, Pan Books, 1989, p.48. Jenkins quotes from Sir Geoffrey Howe's first Budget address.

[100] Ibid, p.50.

[101] Taylor, P., 'Changing political relations', in *Policy and change in Thatcher's Britain*, Edited by Paul Clokel, Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1992, p.34.

102 Riddell, op.cit., p.7

103 Marquand's dimensions of Thatcherism are listed by Taylor, op.cit., p.37.

104 Jenkins, op.cit., p.82.

105 Biddis, M., 'Thatcherism: concept and interpretations', in *Thatcherism: personality and politics*, edited by Kenneth Minogue and Michael Biddiss, London, The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1987, p.2.

106 Letwin, S.R., *The anatomy of Thatcherism*, London, Fontana, 1992, p.18.

107 All points and quotes from ibid., pp.20-21.

108 Kavanagh, op.cit., p.9. For quote see p.12.

109 Ibid., pp.12-13. Also see Martin, R., 'The economy: has the British economy been transformed? Critical reflections on the policies of the Thatcher era', in Taylor, op.cit., p.123. Here Martin states 'Thatcherism promulgated a grandiose neo-liberal vision of the economy in which the control of inflation, the management of sound money, and the promotion of competition, efficiency and supply side flexibility were substituted as the legitimate economic goals of the state. In Mrs. Thatcher's Britain free markets, possessive individualism and self reliance were to replace state intervention and subsidy as the motive forces shaping economic growth and allocation'.

110 Taylor, op.cit., pp.35-36.

111 Quote and other points from Jessop, B., et al, *Thatcherism, a tale of two nations*, Oxford, Polity Press, 1988, pp.6-18.

112 Riddell, op.cit., pp.15-16.

113 Holmes, M., *Thatcherism: scope and limits, 1983-87*, London, Macmillan Press Ltd., 1989, p7.

114 Riddell, P., *The Thatcher decade: how Britain has changed during the 1980s*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1989, p.5. Also see Taylor's account on Marxist theoretical analysis, op.cit., p.36.

115 Gould, Julius and Anderson, Digby, 'Thatcherism and British society', in Minogue and Biddiss, op.cit., pp.41-43.

116 Dolowitz, D., Marsh D., O'Neill, F., Richards, D., 'Thatcherism and the 3 'Rs': radicalism, realism and rhetoric in the third term of the Thatcher Government', *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol.42, no.3, 1996, p.455. In this article the authors analyse the question of the extent of change brought about by the Thatcher Administration in the context of civil service reform, health policy and (un)employment policy.

117 Freedman, L., *Britain and the Falklands war*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1982; Dillon, G.M., *The Falklands, politics and war*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1989.

118 Dolowitz, op.cit., See article for their analyses of Thatcherite policies in various fields.

119 Sharp, P., op.cit., pp.28-29.

120 Holmes, op.cit., p.71.

121 Byrd, P., *British foreign policy under Thatcher*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1988, pp.1-7.

122 Ashford, N., 'The Thatcher dominance of foreign policy', *The Independent*, 4 December 1987.

123 Cunningham, M., *Hostages to fortune: the future of Western interests in the Arabian Gulf*, London, Brassey's Defence Publishers Ltd., 1988, p.9.

124 Ibid., p.11.

125 Levy, Walter J., 'Oil: an agenda for the 1980s', *Foreign Affairs*, vol.59, no.5, Summer 1981, p.1084.

126 Cordesman, Anthony H., *The Gulf and the search for strategic stability: Saudi Arabia, the military balance in the Gulf, and trends in the Arab-Israeli military balance*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press Inc., 1984, p.3.

127 Later in 1981 ARAMCO established that proven oil reserves in Kuwait had increased to 167.85 billion barrels, thus significantly raising the strategic significance of the sheikhdom.

128 Cordesman, op.cit., p.1. See also *Hansard*, vol.62, column 6, 18 June 1984, for official British Government estimates of the top 20 world oil producing countries.

129 Cunningham, op.cit., pp.23-24. All four are members of the GCC.

130 Ehteshami, A., 'The rise and convergence of the 'middle' in the world economy', in *Global interests in the Arab Gulf*, (ed.), Davies, Charles, E., University of Exeter Press, 1992, p.135.

131 Idem.

132 Madian, Alan, L., 'Oil is still too cheap', *Foreign Policy*, no.35, Summer 1979, p.171.

133 Yergin, Daniel, 'US energy policy: transition to what?', *The World Today*, vol.35, no.3, March 1979, p.81.

134 Madian, op.cit., p.174.

135 Venn, Fiona, *Oil diplomacy in the twentieth century*, London, Macmillan, 1986, p.152.

136 Bissell, Richard, E., 'The West in concert: a very complex score', *Orbis*, vol.23, no.4, Winter 1980, p.830.

137 Healey, Denis, 'Oil, money and recession', *Foreign Affairs*, vol.58, no.2, Winter 1979/80, p.226.

138 Deese, David, A., 'Oil, war and grand strategy', *Orbis*, vol.25, no.3, Fall 1981, p.525. In forming his conclusions Deese analysed the effect of oil in three case studies, World Wars 1 and 2 and the Suez crisis of 1956-1957.

139 Ibid, pp.525-526.

140 Turner, L., 'Economic developments in the oil producing Middle East', *Memorandum to the Foreign Affairs Committee, (68/79-80/FM)*, p.126.

141 See *Hansard, 5th Series*, vol.967, 9 May to 25 May 1980.

142 The rapid economic growth in the 1960s due to increased oil revenues resulted in serious imbalances in the economy (especially in the agricultural sector) which were to go unchecked for many years. The 1973 oil crisis itself provided vast sums, of which a substantial amount was subsequently spent unwisely by the Shah's government which failed to take into account significant manpower shortages and an inadequate industrial infrastructure. In addition, the fact that the US became Iran's main trading partner resulted in huge quantities of arms being sold to the latter, thus compounding the economic inequalities. The failure to address economic problems, combined with increasing oppression in what had effectively become a totalitarian state, contributed greatly to growing support for the clergy and in particular Ayatollah Khomeini - exiled since 1964.

143 Ayoob, Mohammed, 'The Superpowers and regional stability: parallel responses to the Gulf and the Horn', *The World Today*, vol.35, no.5, May 1977, pp.197-198.

144 Idem.

145 Doran, Charles F., 'OPEC structure and cohesion: explaining the determinants of cartel policy', *The Journal of Politics*, vol.42, no.1, February 1980, pp.82-83.

146 Ibid., p.89.

147 The combination of great wealth, high strategic vulnerability and the region's importance for the world meant that Gulf security was of prime importance for the states in the region. Their reliance on one resource (oil) and the presence of two large powerful neighbours (Iran and Iraq) significantly

complicated the situation. Other striking similarities included small populations, very large oil revenues, significant military weakness, and similar political systems as well as a relatively similar culture. With regard to external dangers they were all vulnerable to Soviet influence, to the pressures of the Iranian Revolution and to Iraqi hegemony.

148 Cordesman, *The Gulf and the search for strategic stability*, op.cit., p.55.

149 Whetten Lawrence, L., 'The lessons of Iran', *The World Today,* vol.35, no.10, October 1979, p.394.

150 Idem.

151 Rouleau, Eric, 'Khomeini's Iran', *Foreign Affairs,* vol.59, no.1, Fall 1980, p.1.

152 Ibid., p.3. As justification for his arguments Rouleau goes on to argue that the Shah's much vaunted agrarian reforms, for instance, 'benefited only a minority of the peasants, who, in any case, were soon taken over by big companies engaged in large scale industrialized agriculture. The massive importing of agricultural goods, especially wheat from the United States - coupled with the absence or inadequacy of protective tariffs - contributed to the ruin of countless small farmers, aggravated rural unemployment and swelled migration to the cities'. Idem. Also refer to speech broadcast on Teheran radio on 28 October 1979 by Ayatollah Khomeini quoted in Mottahedeh, Roy P., 'Iran's foreign devils', *Foreign Policy,* no.38, Spring 1980, p.30

153 Maull, Hanns W., 'Western Europe: a fragmented response to a fragmenting order', *Orbis,* vol.23, no.4, Winter 1980, p.811.

154 Kemezis, Paul, 'The permanent crisis: changes in the world oil system', *Orbis,* vol.23, no.4, Winter 1980, p.769.

155 The cut-off to Israel demonstrated Iranian support for the Palestinian cause. This is a feasible reason because, despite the Arab-Persian rivalry and conflict, revolutionary Iran was equally if not more anti-Zionist in its orientation and as such was to repeatedly call for the destruction of Israel. Cutting off supplies to South Africa indicated its opposition to white dominance in that country.

156 Stobaugh, Robert and Yergin, Daniel, 'Energy: an emergency telescoped', *Foreign Affairs,* vol.58, no.3, 1980, p.573.

157 Hiro, Dilip, *Iran under the Ayatollahs,* London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985, p.137. Also see extract from speech given by Khomeini quoted by Hiro on p.134.

158 Bulloch, John and Morris, Harvey, *Saddam's war: the origins of the Kuwait conflict and the international response,* London, Faber and Faber Limited, 1991, p.76.

159 The rise in this form of fundamentalism was a response to the crisis facing the Islamic world resulting from the impact of Western imperialism, extremely rapid modernisation, and the challenge posed by Israel to the Arabs and Islam in general.

160 Freedman, Lawrence and Karsh, Efraim, *The Gulf conflict 1990-1991, diplomacy and war in the new world order,* London, Faber and Faber Limited, 1993, p.8.

161 Idem.

162 McKnight, Sean, 'Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi army', in *The Gulf War assessed,* edited by Pimlott, J., and Badsey, S., London, Arms and Armour Press, 1992, p.25. McKnight quotes Samir al-Kabir, *Republic of fear.* Other writers are more conservative in their estimates with figures of around 15,000. See Hiro, Dilip, *Iran under the Ayatollahs,* op.cit., p.18.

163 King, Ralph, 'The Iran-Iraq war: the political implications', *Adelphi Paper 219,* Spring 1987, p.7.

164 Schofield, Richard, 'Borders and territoriality in the Gulf and the Arabian peninsula during the Twentieth Century', in (ed) Schofield, Richard, *Territorial foundations of the Gulf States,* London, UCL Press, 1994, p.41.

165 Cordesman, Anthony H., *The Iran-Iraq war and Western security 1984-87; strategic implications and policy options,* London, Janes Publishing Company Limited, 1987, p.1.

166 Churba, Joseph, 'The eroding security balance in the Middle East', *Orbis*, vol.24, no.2, Summer 1980, p.353.

167 Idem., Churba insisted that even the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the potential threat it posed to the West's oil and trade routes changed US policy only on the surface, claiming that the US became very vocal but took little action.

168 Simes, Dimitri K., 'The anti-Soviet brigade', *Foreign Policy*, no.37, Winter 1979-80, p.28. Also see Jacobsen, C.G., 'Soviet strategic objectives for the 1980s', *The World Today*, vol.35, no.4, April 1979, pp.132-133.

169 Kissinger quoted by Simes, ibid., p.40.

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172 Dawisha, Karen, 'The Soviet Union and the Middle East: strategy at the cross-roads?', *The World Today,* vol.35, no.3, March 1979, p.92.

173 See for instance Bradsher, Henry S., Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, Durham, N.C., Duke Press Policy Studies, 1983, pp.153-160. Here Bradsher analysis a range of possible motives for the Soviet invasion including the possibility that it represented an offensive move towards the Gulf.

174 Halliday, op.cit., p.10.

175 Valenta, Jiri, 'The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan: the difficulty of knowing where to stop', *Orbis,* vol.24, no.2, Summer 1980, p.207.

176 Cobb, Tyrus W., 'The Soviet energy dilemma', *Orbis*, vol.23, no.2, Summer 1979, pp.353-354. Also see Gill., R., 'Soviet oil in the 1980s: shortage or surplus', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.121, no.2, June 1976.

177 Ibid., p.357.

178 Idem. Other useful references are Stern, Jonathan P., 'Soviet energy prospects in the 1980s', *The World Today*, vol.36, no.5, May 1980 and Klinghoffen, Arthur, J., ' US foreign policy and the Soviet energy predicament', *Orbis*, vol.25, no.3, Fall 1981.

179 Cobb, op.cit., p.379.

180 Khalilzad, Z., 'Afghanistan and the crisis in American foreign policy', *Survival*, July/August 1980, p.156.

181 Khalilzad mentions 'changing power patterns in the Persian Gulf, crisis in Turkish-US relations, the disintegration of CENTO (Central Treaty Organisation), the withdrawal of Britain from east of Suez and the relative build up of Soviet military capabilities vis-à-vis the US all favoured Soviet power projection capacity'. Idem.

182 The Soviet wish to allow the Revolution in Iran to continue uninterrupted was reinforced by Brezhnev, as quoted in Pravda on 19 November 1978 warning the West not to interfere in Iran: 'The Soviet Union ... emphatically declares that it is against outside interference in Iran's internal affairs by anyone, in any form and under any pretext. What is happening in Iran is a purely internal affair and the issues must be solved by the Iranians themselves ... It should be clear that any, particularly military interference in the affairs of Iran, a state directly bordering on the Soviet Union, would be regarded by the Soviet Union as affecting the interests of its security', quoted in ibid., p.69.

183 Freedman, L., 'Thatcherism and defence', in *The Thatcher effect: a decade of change*, edited by Dennis Kavanagh and Anthony Seldon, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989, p.143.

184 Jones, P.M., 'British defence policy: the breakdown of inter-party consensus', *Review of International Studies*, vol.13, 1987, p.112.

185 Freedman, L., 'British defence policy after the Falklands', *The World Today*, vol.38, no.9, September 1982, p.331.

186 Ibid., p.332.

187 *Statement on the Defence Estimates 1981, Cmnd 8212-I*, April 1982, pp.30, 32.

188 Freedman, 'British defence policy after the Falklands', op.cit., p.332.

189 Capitanchik, D., 'The changing attitudes to defence in Britain', *Centre Piece*, Summer 1982, p.16.

190 See article by Bruce George, the then Labour member of the House of Commons Defence Committee and Michael Coughlin, 'British defence policy after the Falklands', *Survival*, vol.xxiv, no.5, September/October 1982, pp.201-208.

191 Freedman, 'British defence policy after the Falklands', op.cit., p.333.

192 Freedman, 'Thatcherism and defence', op.cit., p.151.

193 Statement by Michael Heseltine, the then Secretary of State for Defence in 'The United Kingdom's strategic interests and priorities', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.128, no.4, December 1983. A detailed analysis of the changes to the tri-service force structures vis-à-vis out-of-area operations is carried out in chapter 2.

194 Referred to in the thesis as the "Thatcher period" despite the recognition that analysis continues beyond the removal of Mrs. Thatcher as Prime Minister.

## Chapter 2:Analysis of Thatcherite Discourse: 1979-1988

### Introduction

In light of the importance attached to perceptions and ideas, constructivist theory has been adopted to confirm that the conclusions of the thesis have been drawn from within the discourse of the Thatcher era. This closely relates to the hypothesis which has claimed that Thatcherite discourse was dominated by an image based on economics and material interests and that this in turn provided a framework for foreign policy towards the GCC States. Chapter 1's analysis of the phenomenon of "Thatcherism" is also highly relevant in that this links in with the importance that constructivism attaches to ideas, beliefs and perceptions. This analysis was to conclude that Thatcherism was indeed a belief system dominated by notions of economics and interests, and that it was this element of Thatcherism which appears to have been the dominant element within the discourse. Whether or not there was a discursive emphasis on material economic interests and whether these interests then contributed to the shaping of British foreign policy towards the GCC States during the period 1979-1991 is now a matter for the case study and the final conclusions of the thesis.

Internationally, 1979 was a momentous year. Events such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iranian Revolution, the Iran-Iraq war, attempts to take the Arab-Israeli dispute one step further towards peace with the Camp David Accords, and Iraq's move towards rapprochement with Saudi Arabia, all had a specific effect on the formation of British policy towards the region. Domestically, for the first time since 1974, Britain had a government with a secure majority, and the country had voted decisively for change. The Tory campaign had made quite explicit the Party's intention to break with post-war policies, and specifically with those followed since 1964.

This chapter will consider the question of Britain's interests in the Persian Gulf region by assessing several issues prevalent in the discourse, namely, Britain's continuing dependence on Middle Eastern (particularly GCC) crude oil, Britain's general economic decline (particularly in manufacturing industry), and the British government's attempts to increase exports as a way of alleviating some of the economic problems. The chapter will also examine British threat perceptions in the

context of self-assertion, revolutionary changes, conflict within the Persian Gulf (notably the Iran-Iraq war), and the Soviet threat to the GCC States. Finally, it will consider Britain's military presence in the region and analyse to what extent the British presence could be perceived as an active military role.

These factors for analysis, namely oil and markets, have been constructed in this way in light of their prominence in the discourse of the period in question (1979-1988). They gain significance in view of the fact that analysing them provides an insight into Britain's perceived material interests in the GCC States, and they are therefore central in the process of proving or disproving the hypothesis. However, they must also be placed in the context of the perception that Thatcherism was a belief system based upon the notions of economics and interests, and it therefore becomes necessary to analyse issues which are clearly linked to the concept of Thatcherism. The section on British threat perceptions which highlights the Iranian revolution, conflict in the region and the Soviet Union is also relevant to an understanding of British policy, since these issues all feature prominently in the discourse, thereby demonstrating the British preoccupation with stability in the region. This in turn raises questions regarding why Britain was so concerned that the area should remain stable.

## Section 1: Britain's Material Interests in the Persian Gulf: Thatcherite Discourse: 1979-88

To understand the extent of Britain's economic interests in the Persian Gulf region, they must be analysed in the context of a continuing reliance on the region's oil exports and the emergence and development of the GCC States as markets for British civilian and defence products. Chapter 1 highlighted the continuing dependency of Western States on the Gulf region's oil exports and Section 1.1 here, therefore, places this in the British context by analysing a number of factors that demonstrate the importance of the region's oil to Britain.

Section 1.2 then highlights the importance of the Gulf markets to Britain by developing three main points. Firstly, there was significant evidence to suggest that Britain's manufacturing sectors were in severe difficulties, which brought about the inevitable symptoms of increasing unemployment, rising import penetration, balance of payments problems, and a significant decrease in exports of manufactured products. Faced with these recessionary trends exports were given a greater priority.

Secondly, therefore, British industry and elements within the government (dealt with later) became increasingly concerned with the need to develop export opportunities. Defence equipment in particular was seen as providing greater scope for companies to export their products. Finally, there was the question of the continuing search for export markets, an area in which the Arab members of the Oil and Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) were increasingly seen as providing opportunities, not only for civilian products but in particular for defence related equipment. Taken together these factors demonstrate the extent of Britain's economic interests in the Persian Gulf region.

**Section 1.1: The importance of Persian Gulf oil for Britain**

The West's obvious reliance on Middle Eastern oil is demonstrated by the following table:

**Table 2: Middle East Oil Imports as a Percentage of Total Oil Imports, 1978.**

| | USA | Canada | Japan | EEC | France | Germany | UK | OECD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Saudi Arabia** | 13 | 20 | 28 | 20 | 32 | 10 | 20 | 20 |
| **Kuwait** | - | - | 8 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 15 | 4 |
| **Iraq** | 1 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 17 | 2 | 11 | 5 |
| **Iran** | 10 | 15 | 16 | 14 | 9 | 12 | 15 | 13 |
| **UAE*** | 6 | - | 9 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| **Qatar** | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | 3 | - | 1 | 1 |
| **Total Above** | 31 | 39 | 66 | 55 | 71 | 31 | 68 | 49 |

(* United Arab Emirates)
Source: *Second Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee*: Session 1979-80, 6 February 1980, p.119.

Despite its increased self-sufficiency since its own North Sea Oil had begun to be developed, this table shows that the UK continued to import Middle Eastern crude oil which also meant that it could export its own higher-grade crude to countries such as the USA, France and West Germany.[1] The importance of Middle Eastern crude to

Britain was confirmed by the then Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Lord Carrington, who in referring to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (dealt with later) made the following statement to the Foreign Affairs Committee:

> ... we obviously cannot accept it as it now is ... [we are] faced with a situation in that part of the world which is that much more dangerous and in which certain vital interests are at stake, notably the West's oil supply. Two-thirds of the free world's oil supplies go through the Straits of Hormuz ...[2]

Further evidence of British reliance on Middle Eastern oil can be provided by a brief analysis of North Sea oil depletion policy. During the first ten years of development in the North Sea oil fields the Government's intention was to develop the resources as fast as possible. The then Public Accounts Committee concluded:

> ... that the balance of advantage to the United Kingdom lay in exploiting and extracting [the] reserves of gas and oil as quickly as possible. In arriving at this decision [the Government] took account of relevant factors including balance of payments savings, security of supply, possible future fuel shortages, as well as the purely economic advantage ...[3]

A review of policy in 1973 brought in the first definitive signs of policy change, when Trade and Industry witnesses told the Public Accounts committee that it would, in certain circumstances, be of advantage to delay exploitation of Britain's own resources. Subsequently, by 1974, the Labour Government was to become quite explicit in its pronouncements of the need for depletion control. The decision which was eventually taken was to develop rapidly the discovered fields for a few more years followed by greater governmental control over oil production. Up to 1980, however, control remained largely procedural and it was not until July 1980 that the first development delays were actually announced. The then Secretary of State for Energy (David Howell), stated that 'this Government believes that on strategic and security of supply grounds it is in the national interest to prolong high levels of UK Continental Shelf production to the end of the century'.[4] It was obvious that European oil (Norwegian and British in particular) was not subject to the same political uncertainties as oil from the Middle East and as a consequence its conservation as a strategic reserve was advocated. The implications of this are clear. Even though Britain was, at this stage, self-sufficient in oil resources,[5] the fact that the Government was considering the possibility of introducing some form of depletion control so that

Britain's own indigenous resources could be conserved for later use further strengthened the reliance on Persian Gulf oil.

Finally, a memo submitted by the Department of Energy to the Energy Committee in 1984 highlighted the rationale behind another mechanism designed to ensure a secure oil supply. Concern over the disruption of internal distribution lines, brought on by the possibility of threat of 'serious hostilities in North-West Europe'[6] resulted in the imposition of obligations on the oil industry to hold a minimum level of petroleum stocks. It also highlighted the importance of a flexible and diverse oil supply system, thus increasing yet again the importance of Middle Eastern oil.

## Section 1.2: Britain's markets in the Persian Gulf

### *a) Britain's economic difficulties*

There are those such as Morgan who have argued that at the start of the 1980s the British economy was declining at a serious rate. As Morgan states, economic growth was lower in Britain than among its competitors, profitability had deteriorated in manufacturing sectors to a greater extent than in other EEC countries, and industrial innovation was relatively sluggish.[7] Others like Hanaghan, however, argue that it was an exaggeration to suggest that British industry as a whole was in a phase of de-industrialisation. He went on to suggest that the export sales ratio of all manufacturing sectors had risen during the 1970s, resulting in a significant amount of import penetration being offset by rising exports. However, he is unable to dispute the possibility that de-industrialisation was a real phenomenon insofar as areas of manufacturing industry were experiencing a pronounced fall in output. The percentage of manufacturing contribution to the economy had in fact fallen from 37 percent in 1950 to 29 percent in 1980.[8]

The analysis continues with Grant specifying low growth, high inflation, decreased cost competitiveness, high unemployment, a fall in non-price competitiveness of exports, a poor record of productivity growth, and lower rates of return from investments as factors in the structural weakening and consequent impoverishment of the country.[9] He goes on to express concern at Britain's increasing dependence on the depleting asset of North Sea oil to sustain its external account balance.[10] Although much of the debate appeared weighted on the side of decline,

Thain argues that this was not readily apparent, as economic growth in Britain since World War Two had been higher than during earlier periods, although he goes on to admit that there had certainly been relative economic decline.[11]

Elements within the Thatcher Administration were not immune to the effects of this decline. As the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Geoffrey Howe, stated:

> Over the past five years or so, and partly reflecting the poor level of competitiveness, UK industry has lost share in both overseas and domestic markets. Between 1977 and the first half of 1982, the volume of world trade rose by a total of about 18 percent, while UK exports of manufactures were unchanged. In the domestic economy over the same period, the demand for manufactures changed very little, but import volumes rose by 40 percent while output of the UK manufacturing sector fell by 14 percent.[12]

During the same period the Industry and Trade Committee concluded that, as Britain lacked many raw materials and self-sufficiency in food, it depended more heavily than most other nations on the export of goods and services. Recently there had been a greater tendency to import, but this was not being matched by corresponding increases in British exports. These conclusions were drawn following the assimilation of a significant amount of evidence from various sectors of government, academia, and industry. In one memorandum submitted by the Machine Tools Economic Development Committee, for instance, it was stated that:

> Machine tools has been one of the hardest hit sectors of UK mechanical engineering during the recession ... Forecasts for the next cycle anticipate only a moderate upswing in the home demand to 1984, to be followed by a downturn to below the 1982 level by 1986. Import penetration – already over 50 percent – is forecast as edging still higher...[13]

Furthermore, the British Steel Corporation, while admitting that total demand in most of the main sectors of the UK economy had gradually regained some ground lost in the 1979-81 recession, complained that the supply side continued to suffer, with manufacturing activity hardly recovering at all.[14] Subsequently, Britain was to record an overall trade deficit in manufactured goods of nearly £5 billion, the first ever-peacetime deficit in such goods.[15]

Thatcher also, although quick to blame the previous Labour Government's experiments with democratic socialism when addressing the question of Britain's economic decline, nevertheless acknowledged that Britain's economy was failing: '...it was a miserable failure in every respect. Far from reversing the slow relative

decline of Britain vis-à-vis its main industrial competitors, it accelerated it. We fell further behind them, until by 1979 we were widely dismissed as the "sick man of Europe"'.[16]

The belief that the recession of 1979-1981 had harmed Britain had therefore permeated various segments of Industry and the Thatcher Administration, and there was an emerging realisation that Britain had to export more to counteract the rising import penetration of its domestic markets, particularly in manufactured products. As the Industry and Trade Committee stated, 'Irrespective of the contribution made to our balance of payments by North Sea Oil, which some consider may be relatively short-lived, it is essential that the UK's industrial base should be strong in order to meet home demand and to compete successfully in increasingly competitive world markets'.[17]

### *b) The importance of exports for Britain and its defence export development*

These recessionary trends, the decline in British manufacturing industry, import-penetration, increasing unemployment, decreasing exports, and adverse effects on the balance of payments, all provided the Thatcher Government with opportunities to show that it was serious about reversing Britain's economic decline. One such opportunity came about with the government's emphasis on the export of defence equipment. Defence exports were to become increasingly important, as were attempts to search for markets, since the benefits of developing them were visible in a variety of ways which will be discussed below.

As Asteris states, 'the spectre of de-industrialisation manifest[ed] itself more starkly in the absolute decline in manufacturing employment since the 1960s. The total loss of jobs during the past ten years in manufacturing industry had exceeded three million'.[18] He goes on to state, however, that although employment in defence related industry had also declined during this period it had 'proved more resilient than [employment] in the rest of industry'.[19]

The discourse of the era seems to reveal that the Thatcher Administration actively encouraged the sale of defence equipment to overseas customers and, on the face of it, this approach did seem to pay dividends. The Government's own defence spending in 1980-81, for instance, supported over 200,000 jobs directly in British industry, and the exports of defence equipment supported a further 140,000. Overall,

as Asteris claims, 570,000 jobs were supported both directly and indirectly by the defence industry.[20] A Government defence document, published in 1981, highlighted similar figures, stating that some 242,000 jobs were supported directly, with a further 145,000 being supported by exports. The document went on to state that at any one time there were more than 10,000 British companies working on defence contracts either for procurement purposes or for the export market.[21]

Furthermore, with regard to contributions to the balance of payments made by the export of defence equipment, official government figures revealed a healthy overall trade balance. Even so, Asteris argues that this still greatly understated the final impact on the visible account since 'there [was] a huge trade in military goods which it [was] not possible to distinguish from similar goods for civilian purposes', estimated at some £1,138 million in 1981.[22]

The beneficial effects of these factors were further reinforced by Colin Chandler, who stated:

> ... trade follows the flag. One of the points that was true then and became increasingly obvious to government was that when you got a big defence sale, not only did that provide benefits to the economy here in terms of jobs and foreign exchange, it provided influence as well, because clearly defence inevitably involves governments as well. And secondly, you do find in countries like that where the decision-making process finishes up after some filtering through into the hands of a very small number of people, once you do succeed in a major defence sale you get other trade as well.[23]

According to Jones and Rees, Britain's history of arms exports is closely tied to its need to retain some form of independence in domestic and international affairs. Having an indigenous arms industry was seen as a necessary attribute of a major power and much of British foreign policy in the post World War Two era revolved around a wish to revive its pre-war great power status.[24] The British defence industry therefore undoubtedly fared better overall in terms of performance, employment resilience, exports, and quality of products than other manufacturing sectors.

Defence production was, firstly, particularly research and development (R&D) intensive, and this meant that highly trained, expensively educated personnel were employed within the industry. Secondly, the Soviet-American military competition contributed to a large extent to the "need to keep up" syndrome. Thirdly, there were those who believed, as Jones and Rees state, that civilian sectors benefited because of the high pace of technological development in defence related R&D. Finally, there

were larger economies of scale to be gained not only in the production of defence related equipment but also in the design and development phases. Development costs formed a large portion of overall defence production costs, and one acknowledged method of reducing these unit costs was to significantly lengthen production runs which, during the time in question, was enabled by the export of defence equipment.[25]

According to Sir Ronald Ellis, Head of the Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO), it remained difficult to assess the benefits of defence sales because of the problems of definition. Official figures for instance excluded the so-called "invisible" benefits, such as technology transfers, and the employment of those people actually sent abroad to work on particular projects. However, he confirmed that 'Exports of defence equipment can ... help both to keep in business those firms which supply our own armed forces, and also to keep down the cost of their equipment by means of longer production runs and other economies of scale'.[26] He also insisted that an active indigenous defence industry able to find contracts abroad was able also to open enormous gateways to other civilian related projects, such as opportunities for construction industry when building the infrastructure usually needed for sophisticated defence systems.[27]

Hartley also regarded the broad economic and social benefits from defence sales as impressive. He claimed that the military sector provided over a million jobs, supported the health of the nation's balance of payments, contributing over £1 billion in 1979-80 and saving over £3 billion by dispersing imports for domestic consumption. It also led to considerable technical fallout due to its intensive research nature, provided additional jobs in high unemployment areas such as shipbuilding and contributed to other social expenditures.[28]

A brief analysis of the Administration's defence procurement policies will shed further light of the importance attached to defence exports under the Thatcher government. During the early 1980s much attention was devoted to securing better value for money when procuring defence equipment for the armed forces, as defence equipment expenditure was accounting for an ever-increasing proportion of the defence budget. It had, for instance, increased from 35 percent to 45 percent during the 1970s, and according to the then Minister for defence procurement, Geoffrey Pattie, there was a limit to how much further this could continue.[29] The decline in the defence budget combined with rising equipment expenditure meant that it was of paramount importance to halt and reverse this trend.

One important way of achieving this was to place much greater emphasis on the marketability of defence products. As Geoffrey Pattie stated at the time:

> Increased stress is being placed on adjusting operational requirements and technical specifications within acceptable limits to make the prospective equipment more saleable abroad, thus assisting firms to be less dependent on MOD for their markets and profits, and benefiting MOD directly through the reduced unit costs which can result from longer production runs.[30]

John Peters (the then Assistant Under Secretary of State, Air Staff) confirmed this strengthened emphasis on marketing defence products while giving evidence to the Defence Committee in 1980 by stating, '... from now ... we shall be more and more in the red as far as ... costs of British forces are concerned. The only effective way we have of offsetting this is by increasing sales of British defence equipment ...'[31]

It was apparent that changes in the procurement process would lead to successive governments giving increasing support to defence exports. As G.H.Green (Deputy-Secretary of State (Policy), Procurement Executive, under the Callaghan Government) stated, 'the increasing complexity and range of weapon systems, the vastly increased cost of research, development and production, and smaller purchases by the British Services have meant that industry has to rely increasingly on the overseas market'[32]. Green also stated that '... in choosing between different methods of procurement we have to bear in mind balance of payments considerations and the effect on our exports [and] ... weigh the effect[s] on employment ...'[33] This statement further highlights the importance of foreign markets in relation to Britain's domestic economy.

Subsequently, the Thatcher Government's support for defence exports was explicitly declared in the House of Commons itself when Douglas Hurd (the then Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) stated in June 1981 that the '... Government's policy is to support the sale of defence equipment unless there are strong reasons on security or foreign policy grounds for refusing a particular licence'.[34] This was reconfirmed by Michael Heseltine (the then Secretary of State for Defence) in 1985 when he stated that 'The Government continue to provide strong support for the sale of British defence equipment overseas wherever this is compatible with our wider political and security interests'.[35]

Amongst the factors assisting the development of defence exports was an undertaking by the government, through "Memorandum of Understanding"

agreements to ensure the supply of spares for defence equipment sold. Since these contracts meant that defence contractors could export defence equipment with the support of the British government, to which they remained answerable, they contributed to the role played by the government in facilitating arms exports. Such government-to-government contracts under which the defence contractor became responsible for its overseas commitments to the British Government had been increasing in number and in some cases represented the only method of securing orders for equipment. The British Government's willingness to extend this type of understanding obviously encouraged foreign governments to buy British equipment.[36]

The MOD's main role in assisting industry to promote its own defence products revolved primarily around the Defence Exports Sales Organisation (DESO), later known as the Defence Sales Organisation (DSO) which was established in 1966 under a Head of Defence Sales. He in turn was supported by an extensive number of people and 'able to draw upon the resources of the [MOD] as a whole and on the three services with direct access to and personal support of MOD Ministers'.[37] As Sir Colin Chandler (Head of Defence Sales from 1985-1989) stated:

> [The job] was started by a Labour Government in 1966 ... when Denis Healey was the Secretary of State for Defence. He thought that our defence sales effort was too fragmented so he commissioned a study into how we could improve it, and one of the main recommendations of the subsequent study was that defence sales should be headed by an industrialist on secondment from the private sector – someone that knew about industry, knew about trade, knew about exports and so on, and I was the fifth person to do it. The job was basically to bring a focal point in Whitehall for support of our defence industry in selling overseas and that meant getting approvals for sales, getting Foreign Office support through the Ambassadors and High Commissioners, getting credit terms if they were needed from the ECGD [Export Credits Guarantee Department], getting our armed forces to act in support of a sale. If the army had bought a piece of kit then trying to sell it elsewhere was a lot easier ... It was a job that was given a fair amount of scope by the Conservative Government ... you had a fairly free reign within the constraints, it was a very senior job – it had to be, to be able to go and see the Defence Minister in Saudi Arabia as an Emissary of the British Government.[38]

Other than its role in industry the MOD itself was involved in exports via the Royal Ordnance Factories (ROFs) which manufactured tanks, guns and ammunition. During the 1970s, for instance, the MOD's exports to Iran were to increase considerably and this is where the role played by the IMS (International Military Services), another

mechanism to aid the expansion of exports, became crucial. Because of the predominance of military business, in particular with Iran, the Secretary of State for Defence assumed responsibility for this company in 1977 and subsequently ownership of it in 1979. Under the MOD's instructions the company was expected to operate in a commercial fashion (subject to certain guidelines), and in light of this 'all IMS business thus carrie[d] the ultimate backing of the MOD'.[39] It was used increasingly as the commercial arm of the DSO, and its role was to

> ... develop both the sale of defence equipment itself, whether ... from the public sector, products from the Royal Ordnance Factories in particular – and also to provide the requirements associated with the supply of such equipment, such as maintenance, training and infrastructure; and it is in that area that [IMS] ... made a particular contribution in bringing together inputs from both the public and private sectors in a package which [was] an attractive proposition to an increasing number of customers ...'[40]

Iranian contracts formed by far the biggest part of the company's business (predominantly in the form of contracts for tanks until the mid-1980s), and exceeded £2 billion in value. Furthermore, at the end of the 1970s, 30 to 40 percent of the entire output of the ROFs was being sold to Iran. The Iranian Revolution and subsequent political crisis, however, resulted in considerable loss of business, which in turn created severe problems for the ROFs, especially ROF Leeds where the tank orders were expected to provide about 80 percent of the workload until the mid-1980s.[41] Despite the repercussions of the Iranian crisis, the MOD saw a continuing need for the IMS, which, as an incorporated company, had much greater flexibility in controlling and organising its functions and objectives than a government department, and was better placed to respond to customer preferences.[42]

Other mechanisms for encouraging exports included the placing overseas of Development Divisions, whose primary purpose was to carry out aid management functions. Although the direct promotion of British commercial interests was not an explicit role of the Divisions it was common practice for them to liaise closely with the commercial sections in local missions. Of direct relevance in this context was the Middle East Development Division (MEDD) which was set up in Beirut in 1952 and later transferred to Jordan in 1975. This Division played an important role in ensuring that British commercial and industrial sectors were aware of various projects in countries such as Iraq, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.[43]

This brief mention of the Development Divisions demonstrates that it was not just the MOD which was concerned with the export of defence equipment. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) also had a bearing on the export promotion process, as it was common Whitehall practice to consult the FCO closely about all proposals to sell arms overseas. The FCO's general policy was to support the sales of arms abroad, unless there were compelling reasons for not doing so, and its Heads of Missions and staff were available abroad to help promote British defence equipment.

The FCO had a number of important reasons for promoting defence sales. These included, firstly, the fact that assistance to friendly countries enabled them to resist aggression or encroachment from other hostile and anti-Western countries more forcefully. The FCO regarded this as a cost-effective way of providing continued support for pro-Western regimes. As a memorandum stated: 'this applies particularly in areas where Britain has important political and economic interests but where we and our allies cannot provide direct military support'.[44] This view is of particular importance in relation to the GCC, where Britain had crucial interests but could not maintain an overt military presence (see Section 3).

Secondly, arms sales were seen as a way of maintaining good political relations with countries of importance, and finally, as the memorandum stated:

> ... to deny countries which are important to us the right to buy our equipment would be to risk opening up opportunities for countries hostile to British interests to gain footholds in the Third World. All countries have a right ... to self-defence and all exercise this right by purchasing the means to defend themselves. If they are prevented from buying arms from Britain or other allied countries they will look elsewhere.[45]

The Department of Trade was more general in its remit of promoting British exports, as the British Overseas Trade Board (BOTB) was under its jurisdiction. The BOTB's roles were to advise the government on strategy for overseas trade; to direct and develop the government's export promotion services on behalf of the Secretary of Trade; to encourage and support industry and commerce in overseas trade; and to contribute to the exchange of views between government and industry in the field of overseas trade. In addition to this, one of the most important forms of government assistance under the remit of the Secretary of State for Trade was the facility provided by the Export Credit Guarantee Department. This Department was the only

organisation in the UK which insured exporters against the possibility of financial loss due to the political risks endemic in many Third World countries.

### c) *The role of the Gulf markets and British economic interests: Thatcherite discourse*

US President Carter's proposals in May 1978 to restrain Western arms transfers to the Third World received a muted response from most European states, including Britain, for a number of reasons. Firstly, shortly after announcing his arms restraint policy Carter bowed to US Air Force pressure and approved the sale of 7 AWACs to Iran and evidence emerged that the US was considering the sale of its advanced F-1 attack aircraft to Saudi Arabia.[46] There was a clear perception that even if defence exports to Less Developed Countries (LDCs) were not terribly important to supplier nations, they were of immense value to important individual companies such as British Aerospace (BAe) and the French firm Dassault Breguet (renowned for its Mirage exports).[47] The importance of companies like BAe to the British Government was more apparent at the time of recession because the 'structure and prominence of these [companies] transform[ed] any increased unemployment ... into a political question ... [and] ... decisions to lay off workers in ... defence industries necessarily involve[d] direct and visible governmental responsibility'.[48]

Such domestic concerns, combined with worries over the recession, Britain's overall economic decline, and the prominence of British defence industries, made the search for overseas export markets all the more important. One such area where the British effort was particularly prominent was the Persian Gulf region, and the members of the GCC in particular were targeted as potential markets. Here the views of John Nott, Secretary of State for Trade in 1980, are especially useful. He acknowledged before the Trade and Industry Committee that the British economy had performed disappointingly in 1979 in the sense that the trade in manufactured products had grown very little in volume, and factors such as the loss of markets in Nigeria and Iran had been of particular importance in this respect. Furthermore, as an oil and gas-producing nation, the likelihood that Britain would import more manufactured products further confirmed the need for export markets. He also indicated before the Committee that the foreign earnings of the Arab oil producing countries had doubled over the past decade and that British exporters were well

placed to benefit from that increased spending power. He further stressed that his Department's aims were to encourage British firms to seize these opportunities.[49]

At the start of the 1980s the Persian Gulf had become the epicentre of regional conflict, in which a number of elements were of relevance. Analysis of the Iran/Iraq war reveals factors such as resurgent Islam, historic conflict between the Arabs and the Persians, and rivalries between the Shia and Sunni sects of Islam as key issues (see Section 2). Consequently, the Gulf monarchies gave increasing priority to their defence capabilities, and in view of their considerable wealth and high vulnerability it is not surprising that Gulf security became their prime focus. Each of the GCC States faced similar internal problems, namely small populations, large oil revenues, military weakness, and similar political systems, and the formation of the GCC in 1981 itself indicated tentative steps towards integration. Externally the possibility of Soviet incursions and the implications of the Iranian Revolution were further sources of instability, and after 1980 the widening of the Iran-Iraq war remained a constant threat. In the face of these threats the Gulf States had to define their security needs which meant turning, in most cases, to the West for arms supplies, thus making the Gulf region a lucrative market. The high levels of publicity that surrounded the subsequent defence deals also meant that there was significant political interest in such purchases.

The FCO, for instance, welcomed the formation of the GCC, knowing that the possibility of arms sales existed. As Minister of State (FCO) Douglas Hurd stated on 28 October 1981,

> At the Council of Ministers meeting in Brussels last month Foreign Ministers of the Ten welcomed the increased co-operation among the six member states of the newly formed GCC, with all of whom the Ten have close and friendly relations. We have also welcomed the valuable contribution that the formation of the GCC will make towards enhancing regional stability and security. We believe that it should be primarily for the Gulf States to determine their own security needs, and [we] have expressed willingness in principle to help should the states of the region ask us to do so.[50]

Richard Luce, also a Minister of State in the Foreign Office at the time, confirmed this by stating 'we have close and friendly relations with all these states and we have therefore welcomed the formation and development of the [GCC]. We believe that it can make an important contribution to the peace, stability and prosperity of the

Gulf.'[51] Furthermore, another statement by Richard Luce confirms the importance of the Persian Gulf to Britain:

> The preservation of the stability and prosperity of the Gulf region is a major British interest. It is an area with which we have long had close links, and which is one of our most important overseas markets. It is equally important in the context of maintaining a predictable pattern of world oil supplies, to which this area makes a major contribution ...[52]

Although the UK maintained informal contacts with the GCC, substantial dealings were predominantly with the individual member states themselves. Further analysis reveals a significant number of contracts which indicated the salience of economics in the formulation of British foreign policy towards the region. Firstly, in Oman it was clear as early as 1978 that Britain had already conducted a considerable amount of business as the Gulf State's armourer. Lord Beswick, the then Chairman of British Aircraft Corporation (BAC), was to describe British arms sales as 'the new way modern Britain [was] finding of making a living' now that the colonial role was over.[53] In 1974, for instance, BAC was to secure an order for 12 Jaguar Internationals and batteries of Rapier low-level missiles. A subsequent study of Oman's overall defence requirements provided the BAC and the MOD with a substantial contract to develop a master Command and Control network, the purpose of which was to provide Oman with an early warning and tactical control system for the Jaguars. Success in securing this contract led to substantial other military and civilian-related projects, such as a contract secured by BAC in 1976 for the construction of a network of more than 70 facilities for technical training, maintenance and servicing of defence equipment throughout Oman.[54]

By 1979 it was obvious that Oman was spending heavily on modern weapons. In 1978 over 30 percent of its GNP, representing approximately $770 million, was spent on defence equipment.[55] Although its industrial ambitions were to remain modest compared to other wealthier Gulf States such as Saudi Arabia, it was clear that Oman was preparing to 'embark on a selected range of industrial projects in the 1980s which offer[ed] business potential to Western contractors and suppliers'.[56] Of particular interest were copper extraction and smelting plant projects. Significantly, contracts for evaluating the geological and mining aspects of the various projects went to UK companies such as Golden Moffitt and Associates. This shows that British involvement in the Gulf States was not confined to purely defence exports.

However, importantly, Britain was also Oman's main arms supplier. Between 1974 and 1978, for instance, Britain supplied $330 million worth of military equipment, while the US supply came to only around $5 million worth. Although indications were that the US would ultimately outstrip Britain as the main supplier, at this stage British companies continued to rely heavily on Omani contracts.[57] For instance after the initial 12 Jaguars were delivered in 1977-78 indications emerged of the possibility of further orders by Oman from the now newly formed British Aerospace (BAe). Contracts also extended to such companies as Vosper Thornycroft (UK) for naval vessels, for instance the Province Class fast strike craft and other lead ships.[58]

The levels of competition between, for example, Britain and the US also indicate how important these markets were to the West in general. For instance Oman's search for additional fighter jets to supplement its force of 40 Jaguars brought the US and Britain into direct competition, as the US built F-16 and the British Tornado (BAe) fought it out until Oman appeared to settle in favour of the Tornado. BAe announced this decision on 14 August 1985 and hailed it as the Tornado's first major export success.[59] Even though later in February 1986 Oman asked for a delay in the delivery of the aircraft (because of financial difficulties) defence relations between the two countries remained close. The value of the Omani market did not escape the higher echelons of the British Government, as indicated by Sir Geoffrey Howe's (the then Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) statement in 1984:

> [it] is right to emphasise that British industry and expertise have a formidable and important part to play in the development of Oman, as they have been doing for the last 14 years. The United Kingdom is the second largest supplier of Oman. British exports to that country last year were just under £450 million, which represents an increase of almost 70 percent during the last 2 years.'[60]

Mrs Thatcher's own role and activities on a visit to Oman (and other GCC States) at the start of the 1980s indicated how important these markets were. Members of Parliament (MPs) went so far as to question her conduct when in Oman, arguing that she specifically went there to lobby for a £300 million contract for the building of a new university. In the event, the contract was won by 'Cementation International, a subsidiary of Trafalgar House, a known supporter of the Tory Party, and a massive contributor to its funds'. Accusations that Mrs Thatcher's son, Mark Thatcher, would benefit significantly from this particular contract were also made.[61] Whether or not

Mrs Thatcher was "batting for her son" while putting forward British industrial and commercial interests is irrelevant however, since the visit resulted in significant successes in other areas. As Richard Luce stated at the time:

> ... My Rt. Hon Friend the Prime Minister went to the Middle East at a very important time for Britain politically and commercially ... This was the first time any Prime Minister of this country had visited these countries while in office. The purpose was to discuss a range of important political issues. At that time the Gulf War had started and there was the problem of Afghanistan. There was the Arab-Israel dispute and there were many other problems that ...[the PM]... needed to discuss.
>
> Of equal importance was the great value of commercial relations that we have with that part of the world. In 1982 5.5 percent of all British exports went to the Gulf States, including Saudi Arabia ... A number of significant contracts have flowed from [the] ... visit – the National Guard hospital in Saudi Arabia with a total contract value of £120 million; the Hawk Trainer Aircraft for Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Kuwait valued at approximately £160 million; a major defence contract in Qatar worth ... £70 million; and an agreement for the exploitation of the North-West Dome gasfield in Qatar. These contracts provide jobs for Britain [and] ... we have exceedingly important ties in Oman. Last year, our exports ... were £450 million, having increased by 70 percent in the past two years.[62]

Oman continued to rely heavily on Britain in military matters since over a thousand British officers (over 200 on secondment as loan service personnel) were based in Oman. Consequently, Oman's value for Britain should not be underestimated as Thatcher herself was to state in connection with the Iran-Iraq war: 'Sultan Qaboos has always been one of Britain's closest friends in the Gulf ... He was always a source of valuable information about events in Iran. We too were concerned that the war remained confined to those two states and to the northern end of the Gulf'.[63] Britain's concern for stability in the region was also shown by the staging of an exercise involving Oman's armed forces and nearly 5000 men from the British Army, Navy and Airforce. Code-named *Saif Sareea* (Swift Sword), the purpose of the exercise was to 'test Britain's ability to mount a rapid strategic deployment outside the Nato area', and was held between 16 November and 8 December 1986.[64] Later, in October 1987, British officers seconded to Oman were also involved in border clashes with South Yemen. Although the incident was played down and remained unreported, it demonstrated Britain's commitment to Oman. According to Thatcher, such military co-operation between the two countries was to lay the groundwork for British action

in the Straits of Hormuz when the Iran-Iraq war threatened shipping, and for when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.[65]

Similarly in Kuwait, Britain was well placed to capitalise on market opportunities. In 1981 the Kuwaiti Government was to announce that it had allocated an additional $1,835 million for defence equipment, representing about 9.4 percent of the general budget.[66] Kuwait was quick to express an interest in the possibility of purchasing the Tornado and the Hawk Trainer from Britain. Subsequently BAe won a contract for 12 Hawk jet trainers and light combat aircraft worth over £60 million including spares.[67]

Additional factors helped Britain secure certain civilian and in particular defence contracts in Kuwait as well as in other Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia. One issue in particular is important in that it had a tremendous effect on British exporting opportunities. The opposition of the powerful Jewish Lobby in the United States to the sale of sophisticated defence equipment to Arab States meant that countries such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia began to diversify their sources so as not to rely solely on one supplier. This in turn enabled Britain to secure large defence contracts. For example, a request by Kuwait to purchase US Stinger missiles received an icy response from the US on the grounds that they might fall into the hands of terrorists.[68]

Kuwaiti fears over the possibility of the Iran-Iraq war spreading and increased Iranian attacks on shipping prompted Kuwait to seek Western and Soviet help to bolster its defences. Initial US refusal to supply sensitive defence equipment such as Stinger missiles persuaded Kuwait to attempt to diversify its sources of supply. British Defence Secretary George Younger's visit on 11 July 1988 indicated British concern for Kuwait's stability and its attempt to capitalise on the problems faced by the US Administration in supplying defence equipment. The US Senate's refusal to supply Kuwait with advanced FA-18 Hornet fighters prompted Kuwait to consider the British, German and Italian Tornado and the French Mirage 2000. David Mellor (a Foreign Office Minister at the time) accompanying Younger stated that Whitehall had rejected Israeli objections to an arms deal with Saudi Arabia. This indicated that Britain was prepared to sell arms to Kuwait without attaching any conditions. Kuwait was also reported to be looking to purchase British tanks, and Sandown Class Minesweepers, built by Thornycroft.[69] Even though by August 1988 the US appeared ready to sign the fighter deal with Kuwait, the fact that Britain was prepared to offer

to sell its own advanced defence equipment indicated strong British commercial and defence interests in the Emirate.[70]

Apart from the lucrative market for defence and other products, the huge levels of Kuwaiti investment in the UK market represented another factor which ensured that Britain's interests in the country continued to be of primary importance. Sitting atop 70 billion barrels of oil[71], with an annual revenue of more than $10 billion and a tiny population, Kuwait was able to increase its investments in overseas, particularly Western markets, to a very significant level.[72] By 1980, for instance, the investment income of 'KD 1,620m was almost sufficient to cover the total imports of KD 1,647m. In 1981 this income will be well into the KD 2bn range – an indication that Kuwait will be independent of oil income in respect of meeting its import bill and Government expenditure'. The Kuwait Investment Office (KIO), based in London, was cited to be the 'second most important generator of commission income in the City'.[73] In addition, in 1986, the Kuwait Petroleum Company bought a network of petrol stations in Britain, making it the seventh European country with KPC outlets, and in 1987 Kuwait completed the purchase of British Petroleum operations in Denmark, indicating its importance to other European states.[74]

In Saudi Arabia Britain played a significant role and benefited tremendously despite periodic problems in relations between the two countries. Three issues are of importance when analysing Saudi Arabian Defence contracts in the British context. Firstly, there were differences of opinion between the US Congress, prone to being influenced by the powerful Jewish lobby, and the US Administration, with regard to the sale of sophisticated defence equipment to Saudi Arabia. Closely linked to this were Saudi Arabia's decisions to diversify its sources of supply, which had a profound effect on the already intense levels of competition between arms suppliers. In other words, these decisions enabled certain states, which might not have benefited had Saudi Arabia remained reliant on the US, to secure important contracts. Finally, it is important to assess briefly how important the contracts themselves were and the efforts that went into securing them.

Saudi Arabia's defence purchases were based on a multiple sources policy. Traditionally heavily reliant on the US for most of its defence equipment, the Saudi decision to loosen its ties was based upon two overriding political considerations. The first concerned Saudi Arabia becoming disillusioned with the US's commitment to its security. Embarrassing episodes such as the debacle over the sale of the F-15s and

AWACs to Saudi Arabia at the end of the 1970s set in motion events and decisions which were to lead increasingly towards a Saudi diversification policy. The opposition by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) in the US Congress and elsewhere in the Administration persuaded the Saudi decision-makers that the US was not a reliable ally, particularly in the face of a powerful Jewish lobby.

The issue was made a test of US friendship, and after considerable Congressional objections the US did finally undertake to provide 60 F-15s at a cost of £2.8 billion and $2 billion for backup services. However, the damage in the relationship had already been done. Further problems emerged later when the Saudis requested extra fuel pods for the aircraft, which would have given the F-15s far greater range and striking power.[75] The AIPAC was to object again on the grounds that the fuel pods would enable the Saudi F-15s to strike deep into Israel.

The second factor influencing Saudi moves away from the US concerned the latter's policy of support for Israel. The US was to see the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel as having strengthened the possibilities for peace between Israel and the Arab World. Saudi Arabia, however, regarded the Arab-Israeli dispute as the most destabilising factor in Middle Eastern politics, and did not share US optimism over the accords. Saudi reasoning was based on the fact that other, less moderate, Arab States such as Iraq and Syria strongly opposed the accords, and Saudi Arabia had no wish to antagonise them.

In applying diplomatic pressure on Saudi Arabia to accept the peace accords, the US demonstrated a serious failure to understand Arab politics. Saudi Arabia wished to improve its relations with radical regimes such as Saddam Hussain's in Iraq, particularly since Iraq had been gradually moving out of its isolation and had become more influential in Arab politics. The Saudis, therefore, had no desire to confront such a powerful neighbour 'especially after the disappearance of the Shah's Iran as a counterbalance to Iraq'.[76] Closely linked to this factor was the Saudi fear that too prominent a US presence on its soil would create difficulties in its relations with the more radical Arab States such as Iraq. This was another aspect of Gulf politics which the US failed to understand.[77]

Saudi anxiety over Washington's support for Israel was to increase further following Reagan's failure to make a stand over Israeli West Bank settlements. Such factors were to provide King Fahd of Saudi Arabia with the confirmation that the Saudi decision to distance itself from the US was the correct one.[78] This gradual

loosening of ties had a profound effect on Saudi Arabia's defence procurement policy, as it now sought to diversify its sources, and this in turn enabled other arms suppliers, such as Britain, to step in and significantly increase their share of the enormous Saudi market.[79]

Britain took significant steps to ensure that it could capitalise on these problems, thus enabling it to "steal" business away from the US and increase its own exports to Saudi Arabia. The US Administration, in being prone to influence from the AIPAC, was either not able to sell the weapons to Saudi Arabia or attached unacceptable (to the Saudis) conditions on their placement and use, thereby enabling Britain to strengthen its position.

The Saudi Arabian and American viewpoints also diverged considerably when it came to assessing the greatest threat to Middle Eastern security. Whereas the US believed the Soviet incursions into the area were of paramount importance, Saudi Arabia, despite its anti-communist credentials, held the view that the Arab-Israeli dispute constituted the main threat to the region. Here again the British position needs to be analysed.

In view of the fact that Saudi Arabia was reluctant to rely on the US any longer for its arms supplies, Britain was careful to adopt a more pragmatic line on both fronts so as not to antagonise the Saudis, and this approach did pay dividends in the form of large defence and civilian-related contracts. Firstly, on the question of the sale of sophisticated defence equipment, Britain ensured that it did not make the same mistakes as the US had over the AWACs and the F-15s. Although the contract for the sale of Tornados to the Saudis was not finalised until 1985, the British ensured that no obstacles were placed in the path of such an agreement.[80] The Saudi interest became apparent as early as 1981, but this caused some concern in West Germany, as the initial requests had come through Panavia, the Munich based company which controlled the Tornado programme. Under West German law it was not permitted to sell arms to areas of tension, and so one suggested solution was that Britain would handle the sale, with aircraft being delivered from the BAe factory in Warton.[81]

An article in the *Observer* at the time provided further proof that Britain was not concerned with attaching conditions to the sale of its own equipment. This stated that, because of the embarrassing objections raised by the AIPAC, Saudi Arabia was considering shifting its attentions to the British Nimrod and dropping its request to buy the American AWAC altogether.[82]

One main US concern over the sale of the F-15s to Saudi Arabia was their placement, as their positioning at forward bases would have meant a strike at Israel could be possible in the event of conflict.[83] This in itself contributed to Saudi reluctance to remain solely dependent on the US for its front-line strength. Britain, however, ensured that no such conditions were attached, and instead repeatedly stressed the strong trade links between the two countries. This attitude was confirmed by a quotation from *Flight International* which stated that any Saudi request for equipment would be treated 'extremely favourably, as would any Saudi order for any British weapon system'.[84] Further statements by officials in the Department of Trade confirmed such sentiments, as can be seen by Mr Channon's comments in the House of Commons in November 1984 and 1985 respectively: following a visit to the Gulf States '... The Middle East ... is an extremely important market for the United Kingdom, and businessmen seem satisfied with what the Government are doing to help ...'; and in 1985, 'Trade with the Gulf States is about £3 billion annually. We are mounting a special programme in conjunction with British trade associations and chambers of commerce to increase awareness of export opportunities in the Gulf markets ... the [GCC] are now our third largest trading area after Europe and the United States'.[85] Furthermore, in being questioned about markets in the Middle East, and specifically in Saudi Arabia, Richard Luce stated in February 1985, 'it is certainly the case that we have good relations with many Arab countries ... we hope that it will be possible to sell certain equipment to them ...'[86]

The British aerospace industry had traditionally been closely involved in the arming of the Royal Saudi Arabian Airforce (RSAF) and the latest contract, a £500 million extension of a government-backed air defence agreement, had been signed in 1981. This contract was for the maintenance, training and related services for the 31 British Lightning Interceptors and 40 Strikemaster trainers which had been in service with the RSAF since 1966. It had been due to expire in August 1982 but, following the 1981 agreement, it was extended till 1985.[87] There was concern amongst British Aerospace officials and the government, however, that unless the company secured another order after the expiry of this final extension for the maintenance of now considerably aged Lightnings, there would be a significant reduction in the British presence and influence in Saudi Arabia. A major effort by British Government officials in the form of numerous ministerial visits to Saudi Arabia resulted in general export figures increasing by £216 million to a high of £946 million at the end of 1981.

As Keatley stated at the time, 'Mrs Thatcher's ambition was to increase this figure to well over £1.2 billion and to see that big British firms [achieved] a larger share of the contracts being awarded under the Saudi 5-year plan, budgeted at £107 billion'.[88] Another article at the time claimed that Saudi Arabia was Britain's largest market outside Europe and the United States. Although the defence sector was one of the key areas: 'more than half Britain's exports to the Kingdom [were] capital goods in the form of plant and equipment', there were also other important sectors such as chemicals, telecommunications, processed foodstuffs, and electricity power supply.[89]

The second area in which the British were able to capitalise on the American position was the Middle East peace process between Israel and the Arabs. Even though there was no great divergence in views, there were factors which suggested that Britain had adopted an independent approach. The British adopted the position that the PLO would have to be associated with the negotiations of any eventual peace settlement, and this was a far more acceptable viewpoint for the Saudis than the US position, since it refused to have any dealings with the PLO, and had made its position clear in 1975.[90] It had also been indicated by Mrs. Thatcher herself that the Foreign Secretary might have to meet the PLO leader Arafat at some time in the future. Ultimately, therefore, the British recognised that the PLO could not be ignored. As Hurd stated in July 1981, '... we believe that progress towards a negotiated comprehensive peace settlement cannot be made without taking into account the political support that the PLO has among the majority of the Palestinian people'.[91] Also, by her own admission, Thatcher's own views coincided to some extent with those of Saudi Arabia: in comparing the dangers of the Iran-Iraq war to the Arab-Israeli dispute Thatcher was to state, '... I always felt that the Arab-Israeli dispute was of even more abiding importance. For it was this which time and again prevented the emergence ... of a solid bloc of more or less self-confident pro-Western Arab states, no longer having to look over their shoulders at what their critics would make of the plight of the landless Palestinians'.[92]

The British viewpoint, therefore, led the Arabs to believe that they could expect a slightly different attitude from Britain. Although Britain agreed with the US that the Soviets posed a major threat to the region, it was nevertheless prepared to adopt a more pragmatic approach to the Arab-Israeli dispute: 'the twin principles in the European initiative announced at Venice [stated] that the legitimate rights of the

Palestinians should be recognised and at the same time, that the security of Israel should be recognised'.[93]

The Camp David agreement was generally acknowledged as a significant breakthrough for Israel's security with regard to Egypt. However, the British Government recognised that further steps needed to be taken: 'The achievement of the Camp David agreements in bringing peace between Israel and Egypt was enormous ... It is true [however] that there has not been parallel process in the negotiations on the Palestinian part of the agreements, and something more than [Palestinian] autonomy may well now be required ...'. Furthermore, despite the Government's support for American efforts over the peace process, there was obviously a body of opinion which questioned the American approach: 'obviously we shall discuss this matter with our American allies, but I do not think it does any good to criticise them ...'. This attitude was also prevalent with regard to the Soviet threat: 'although there is an East-West aspect to most of these subjects, the problem on the ground is what matters'.[94]

The divergence in opinions between the US and Britain was also apparent over a number of Israeli actions in the region. This was particularly the case when President Reagan failed to make a stand over Israeli settlements in the West Bank. The British Government's viewpoints were clearer: '... I hope that we can all agree that we regret the speeding-up of settlements on the West Bank. As the House knows, the Government and earlier British Governments have always believed that those settlements are illegal and are an obstacle to peace'.[95] In addition, as Douglas Hurd stated: '... it is recognised that Israel's security needs exist, that they are real and that any negotiations for peace must take them into account. Equally the Government of Israel must ask themselves whether Israel's security needs are best based on military occupation of Arab lands', and as he later commented in the event of Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights: 'There are genuine differences of view between the British and Israeli Governments ... we have made clear at the UN and elsewhere our rejection of the Israeli action over East Jerusalem and, more recently, the Golan Heights'.[96]

In addition, at the time of the Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon, Francis Pym (the then Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) not only criticised the Israeli action, but also indicated clear support for the PLO:

> '... the [Israeli] destruction of the PLO's organisation in Beirut will not ... enhance Israel's security ...[they] are men who have tried to lead a disparate movement towards a diplomatic solution to their grievances. They may not always have done so consistently, but that has been their purpose ... and as well as representing our views to Israel we have taken the opportunity to represent them strongly to the United States'.[97]

British commercial persistence and a pragmatic approach in its dealings with Saudi Arabia resulted in considerable rewards. Of particular significance was the securing of the *Al Yamamah* contract. With the BAe Lightnings maintenance contract coming to an end in 1985, it was imperative that Britain secure a sizeable contract in Saudi Arabia, particularly in the face of French competition.[98] Securing the contract would guarantee British influence and involvement in Saudi Arabia's (amongst other GCC States) highly lucrative defence sector while losing the contract would have resulted in Britain's exclusion from significant portions of the Saudi market for the foreseeable future. By September 1985, however, it was clear that Saudi Arabia wished to buy Tornadoes and other aircraft from Britain. Known as the *Al Yamamah* deal, this purchase marked one of Britain's largest ever contracts and was widely hailed a success in the press, receiving personal attention from Mrs. Thatcher [99], and featuring prominently in the discourse. Sir Colin Chandler's views on the *Al Yamamah* contract are as follows:

> First of all, Britain probably has the best armed forces in the world and it follows that we have got good equipment – also during the early part of the '80s there had been a lot of effort in the MOD to make our defence more competitive and more efficient through a competition policy which our main competitors (the continentals) didn't have – so all these factors plus the strategic interests of Britain in the Middle East meant that this was an obvious trade to be involved in [with] friendly countries – every country has the right to defend itself and this is followed by the fact that it has got to have the means to do it, and if we didn't sell the equipment it was clear that someone else would have. So all these reasons came together and Mrs. Thatcher was very strong on defence anyway and she saw what it did for the UK and what it did for relations with other countries – bringing us closer to some of these foreign customers – not just in the defence area but also politically closer relationships quickly led to trade in other areas. So she saw that and was very strong on it. Whenever we asked for help, provided the case was made properly and it was the right time for her to intervene (you can't play the Prime Minister's card every other minute) she was happy to do so and she was happy to write to King Fahd in the summer of 1985 the famous letter which said "yes you can have Tornadoes and yes we will take Arabian oil in return" ... she was also happy to see a

> leading Saudi Emissary off while on holiday and nobody disturbed the Prime Minister when she was on holiday ever.[100]

There was also no doubt about the importance that the British Government attached to the preservation and creation of jobs in Britain which such defence contracts brought about. In addition to jobs it was clear that such deals generated expansion in other areas of trade with the Middle East. This was further indicated by the parallel efforts being made by the MOD to lead an attempt to sell tanks and other armoured vehicles worth at least £500 million to Saudi Arabia, as a result of which two Challenger tanks were dispatched to Saudi Arabia for field trials. This example in particular demonstrated the close co-operation between the MOD and the defence industry (in this case BAe). There was evidence to suggest that the vehicles were to form part of the huge package of defence equipment, including the Tornadoes, that Britain was hoping to sell to Saudi Arabia.[101]

The importance of *Al Yamamah* became apparent in reports as early as 1986 which suggested that the contract could be worth much more than the original £5 billion. Even the various contracts signed in 1985 were expected to provide several years' work for various British firms, secure over 18,000 jobs directly and provide benefits for a further 50,000 in the British aerospace industry.[102] Clearly, the implications for British industry were considerable. At the time it was estimated that the initial contract itself would mean a lengthening of production lines until at least 1991. The fact that Britain was to supply most of the weapons systems for the Tornadoes meant significant knock-on benefits for BAe's sub-contractors. Hunting Engineering, for instance, was to supply the JP233, a runway-cratering weapon, and BAe itself provided its own new anti-radar Alarm missile. In addition, the very large maintenance, spares and training programme should not be overlooked as this led to final estimates of the contract's worth exceeding the £10 billion mark over the following decade.[103]

Expectations regarding the widening of the contract came to fruition in July 1988 with a major new phase of Project *Al Yamamah* 'involving the supply to ... Saudi Arabia of additional aircraft, a construction programme and specialised navy vessels'.[104] The contract was now deemed to be even more 'staggering both by its sheer size and strategic importance' and was expected to be worth over £10 billion, last over 20 years and seal British-Saudi defence relations well into the next century'.[105]

The sheer scale of the contract meant that Saudi Arabia was keen to establish a method for offsetting some of the costs. However, the British Government's inability to force British companies to set up joint ventures in Saudi Arabia meant that additional contracts came under threat.[106] This was demonstrated by the Saudi hesitation to order submarines from Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering (UK) in 1987, since it was believed at the time that the problem over *Al Yamamah* offsets was threatening the Vickers package.[107]

The importance of *Al Yamamah* meant, however, that the British Government made a conscious effort to encourage offset investment in Saudi Arabia. As David Mellor stated at the time, 'So far the MOD Offset Office has been in touch with 200 British firms and a number of leading Saudi businessmen and they have had a very positive response both from the Saudis and from the British private sector, and they are actually discussing at the moment venture ideas with the companies concerned'.[108] An agreement, valued at over £1 billion, was subsequently signed in July 1988 with the express purpose of assisting projects in both the civilian and defence sectors. This was seen as a compromise, since the Saudis finally recognised that the British Government could not force British firms to invest in Saudi Arabia, but would actively encourage them to do so, thereby setting a precedent for future trade relations.[109]

The securing of defence contracts in the highly competitive international arms market was clearly not easy and it is important to stress the degree of effort expended by various British officials including Mrs. Thatcher, Lord Carrington, John Nott, and Douglas Hurd. There are also examples of events which suggest that success was not always assured. For instance, the British refusal to allow a PLO member to be part of an Arab League mission visiting London to hold talks with Mrs. Thatcher had the effect of angering Saudi Authorities, and this in turn threatened British contracts in the Kingdom.[110] This indicated the close connection between political and commercial interests. Similarly, following the showing of the "Death of a Princess" on television, relations deteriorated to such an extent that the British Ambassador (James Craig) had to be recalled.[111] The importance which the British Government attached to commercial and political relations with the Saudis was later indicated by the frantic apologies conveyed by various officials such as Mr. Hurd, when he visited Saudi Arabia in June 1980, and also by Lord Carrington, when he visited shortly after in August of that year.[112]

The competitive nature of the international arms market was another problem faced by British defence exporters. Saudi Arabia's own policy of supplier diversification compounded this problem. The connections with the United States have already been mentioned, and France and Germany were other strong contenders for defence contracts. West Germany, however, followed restrictive arms practices which meant that the sale of German Leopard tanks, for instance, was problematic,[113] but there were indications that the embargo on direct weapons sales was weakening, which could, therefore, enable the sale of the tank. France, on the other hand, suffered from no such restrictive practices and was therefore another major European arms supplier. In 1980 France won defence contracts worth $3.5 billion to supply four 2000 tonne frigates, two 17,000 tonne naval replenishment ships, 24 Dauphin helicopters and ship-to-ship and air-to-air missiles. Another huge contract worth £2.9-3.3 billion to supply a low altitude aerial defence system was secured in 1984.[114]

*Al Yamamah* and other deals showed, however, that despite the competition and other problems such as those outlined above, British commercial interests in the Gulf States were of significant importance. This interest extended right up to Mrs. Thatcher whose visits at the start of the 1980s were intended, as Fay claimed, 'as a prelude to a closer alliance with the leading power in the Gulf'.[115] He went on to comment on Mrs. Thatcher's belief 'that perhaps Britain had neglected the region since the British withdrawal in 1971, but it [was] intended to put that right in future'.[116]

The above analysis has relied heavily on Thatcherite discourse during the period 1979-1988 and has drawn extensively on both primary and secondary sources to present evidence in support of the view that economic interests cannot be dismissed when considering the factors which influenced British foreign policy towards the GCC States, namely the hypothesis stated in chapter 1. Further support for this notion was provided during a personal interview by Stephen Day:

> 'The Gulf was enormously important for Britain throughout the period ... I can't remember the figures we used to quote – I think it was in the region of 100,000 British people who lived and worked in the Gulf and there was a much greater number whose jobs depended on contracts in the Gulf. And that covered a pretty broad spectrum of employment sectors ... [including] engineers, a lot of them working for American companies. A number of American companies based their operations source for a lot of their material out of UK enterprises, the obvious one was ... Bechtal. The construction industry also depended heavily on that area even though the boom was beginning to tail off –

> nevertheless, there remained a great deal of work ... down, of course, through to the armaments industry.[117]

Economic elements have been shown to be prominent in the discourse of the era, and this prominence would seem to gain added significance if one subscribes to the viewpoint that Thatcherism was indeed a belief system based on ideas of economics. Apart from demonstrating the importance of the Gulf, the above analysis has shown that because of the general decline in the British economy, particularly in the manufacturing sectors, a significant degree of importance was placed on exports. The Gulf States undoubtedly provided lucrative marketing opportunities for British products, with defence equipment leading the way. In addition, Mrs. Thatcher's role as campaigner for British exports to the region has also been highlighted.

It may be useful here to pause and consider the implications of the above analysis for British foreign policy towards the GCC States. The discursive analysis has shown the prominence of economic factors; however, constructivist principles advocate the asking of reflective questions. In this light, therefore, a reflective question would be whether it was likely that British foreign policy was shaped entirely by economic factors despite Thatcherite emphasis on material economic interests. This type of question must be asked because, unlike positivist analysis which is based upon objective scientific methodology, constructivism argues that understanding international relations relies on perceptions, understanding, and reflecting upon what constitutes the social, namely a subjective emphasis.

This reflection must be placed in the context of Sir Frank Cooper's comments. In his position as Permanent Under-Secretary of State (MOD), he appeared less convinced of the value of British exports to the region. He regarded British interests in the region as predominantly historical with commercial interests being over-played somewhat: '... I think the oil interest had diminished quite significantly – It was important – but I don't think it ever was, either in the Government or within industry the main interest'.[118] As regards other general commercial interests, Sir Frank Cooper appeared equally non-committal, claiming that they were not a mainspring of British policy but rather an element of it. This, in his opinion, was rather an after-effect

> ... of our moving out of those places. If you look at Southeast Asia I would take the view that we ... held back on keeping trading relationships' and 'as far as the Gulf was concerned – of course trade was important in a commercial sense – but I don't think that trade followed the flag or really dictated the course of events ... The

> Conservatives wanted good relations – we didn't want a Gulf in flames ... So I think we were taking a more pragmatic rather than gainful [view] – it was like getting the most out of a situation without putting in too much cost or effort'. He went on to state that Britain certainly wanted to keep the contracts achieved and get more but 'we had given up the idea that we could control the situation in overt competition with France, to some extent Italy and the United States ... our political motivation wasn't very high to be frank – nor would we go all that far to defend contracts and this, that and the other beyond what we were already doing. We were very pragmatic about it'.[119]

Despite having these views, Sir Frank Cooper nevertheless confirmed Mrs. Thatcher's high profile in pushing both for making a contribution to stability in the Gulf region and increasing her support for companies selling their products there. Her attitude undoubtedly increased the level of the threshold, '... as much as anything else there was a recognition that ... they could be trading partners so that we could make a lot of money that way which would help to get our economy moving again ... she did make a significant contribution [and] was at great pains when any rulers of those States came to England, she would go out of her way – her opinion was that these people had a lot of money and historically Britain knew a lot about them and had had relations with them for a long time, and so we ought to get more than our fair share'.[120]

The discourse analysed has already demonstrated the prominence of economic factors, as was also shown by Mrs. Thatcher's attempts to cultivate and encourage relations with the GCC States. As Lord Hurd commented during a personal interview:

> She was always very good at seeing people over here - now that is very important for the Gulf because a lot of the people concerned came to London and they wanted to see the Prime Minister - her time was very scarce - but she was always very good at that - and very good at handling the events.[121]

What light does evidence such as this throw on possible conclusions, therefore? On the one hand it has been argued that economic material interests influenced the shape of policy, but here clearly multiple factors of explanation begin to emerge. Sir Frank Cooper's insistence that historical factors were at least as important as commercial interests prepares the way for a fuller consideration of multiple explanations in the final conclusion.

## Section 2: British Threat Perceptions

Whatever the motivating factors, as Sir Frank Cooper highlighted, the British government was concerned that the Gulf region should remain stable. It is useful to identify elements within Thatcherite discourse, therefore, which point to this objective. This analysis is relevant given that any examination of British foreign policy towards the GCC States has to be considered in the context of the perceptions held by the government of any threats that faced the region. As highlighted in chapter 1, threats facing the region can be categorised as both internal, such as revolution in Iran and the Iran - Iraq war and external, such as the British perception of the Soviet threat to the region.

### Section 2.1: Internal Threats

#### *a) Political changes*

Analysis of secondary sources pointed to the belief that the Iranian Revolution constituted a threat to general Western interests in the Persian Gulf. Its virulently anti-Western nature, its territorial claims on Gulf States such as Bahrain, and its calls on other Shi'ites in the Arab world to revolt against their own governments increased the Western sense of insecurity. Under threat were the Gulf markets, and the oil and trade routes through the Straits of Hormuz.[122] The immediate implications of the Iranian Revolution were to cause a number of problems for the British Government. But to what extent did the British government perceive the revolution in Iran to be a threat to its interests in the region? In order to answer this, the viewpoints and statements of various government officials on a number of issues must be analysed. Firstly, the implications of the Revolution for the British economy need to be assessed. Secondly, what were the effects of Iran's detention of British missionaries? Thirdly, to what extent were the British concerned over Iran's persecution of its own Baha'i community? Fourthly, the question of whether the academic community's belief that Iran's Islamic viewpoints were a threat to Western interests needs to be placed in the British context. Finally, in view of the recent invasion of Afghanistan, how concerned were the British about the possibility of the Soviets developing close connections with the new Iranian regime?

The effects on the British domestic economy as a result of the Revolution were significant. The oil price rise (a rise of over 30 percent) had an increasingly detrimental effect on the international economy and, as Thatcher stated, also had a damaging effect on the domestic economy due to Sterling's position as a petro-currency. Being tied in to oil prices meant that its value appreciated accordingly, which in turn brought with it all the symptoms of a high value currency such as increasing interest rates and problems for British exporters.[123]

There also seemed to be some tension in the British - US relationship, since although Mrs. Thatcher supported President Carter over the imposition of economic sanctions against Iran as a response to the US hostage crisis, in light of domestic considerations Britain felt unable to comply with all that the US requested. This was particularly apparent when Britain refused to freeze Iranian financial assets (as the US had done), as this 'would have had a devastating effect on international confidence in the City of London as a world financial centre'.[124]

Furthermore, the difficulties which the Iranian economy faced following the Revolution appeared to have had a detrimental effect on the employment prospects in certain British industrial sectors. During the 1970s, for instance, the MOD's exports of tanks and ammunition (manufactured by the Royal Ordnance Factories) were to increase considerably. Iran's decision to terminate various contracts resulted in the loss of considerable business that the uncompleted orders represented. 30 to 40 percent of the ROFs entire output was being sold to Iran.[125] As John Graham (Ambassador to Iran at the time of the Revolution) stated: 'On the tanks, the contract [was] terminated by the Iranians ... we were left with hulls and partly constructed tanks and long lead items ordered, and are obviously looking for another buyer ... I am aware that there were other defence contracts which were also terminated, for construction particularly ... and we are owed a great deal of money ... we will have very great difficulty, I think, in negotiating a satisfactory settlement'.[126]

Certain individuals such as David Howell (the then Energy Secretary) also indicated that Britain was likely to face problems with the supply of oil as a result of the disruption of supplies from Iran. As he was to state: 'Following the disruption of oil supplies from Iran from the early part of the year, a tight world oil situation has developed, with total supplies on present estimates likely to be well short of expected demand world-wide. The position in Iran could easily worsen again and the prospect from the other suppliers is at best fragile'.[127] As far as the UK was concerned it was

clear that supplies were at the same level as the previous year, but demand for oil had increased considerably, so in actuality supplies to the UK as a whole were around 5 percent below what was expected.[128] This confirms that Britain continued to rely on Persian Gulf oil despite having its own indigenous supplies.

The second factor concerned the Iranian seizure of the US Embassy in Tehran and the taking of hostages which provoked bitterness and condemnation in the United States and ultimately led to the embarrassing and failed rescue attempt.[129] Britain adopted a similar position by supporting the US in the Security Council over the imposition of economic sanctions against Iran. These sanctions were later lifted, however, following the release of the hostages, but obstacles to better relations remained because of Iran's detention of British subjects. This was confirmed at the time in the following statement: 'we hope that the release of US hostages will pave the way for a better overall relationship between Iran and the West. We for our part wish to build a normal relationship with Iran in the future, but the continuing detention of 4 British subjects ... places an important obstacle in the way of this'.[130] Also a more forceful statement by Douglas Hurd indicated the degree of frustration felt by the British Government in its dealings with the new Iranian regime. Since their arrest, the Foreign Office had had no contact with the hostages, and Britain insisted that, despite Iran's obligations under international law, it had brought no formal charges against the detainees except the 'most general and wild accusation against the Anglican Church of spying and counter-revolutionary activities'.[131]

Thirdly, Britain's position at the United Nations over Iran's human rights abuses was clear. Throughout the period 1980-1988, numerous statements by British officials condemned Iran's persecution of members of its own Baha'i community. For example, Malcolm Rifkind stated in March 1983: 'Representatives of the Ten have made three demarches to the Iranian authorities, most recently on 27 December, to express our concern at the human rights violations against the Baha'is. We continue to believe that the best hope of persuading the Iranian Government to respect human rights is to take further action in the United Nations'.[132]

The fourth factor concerns the deposition of the Shah and the formation of the new government in Tehran. This caused deep concern in Britain, as the British Government had previously enjoyed close relations with Iran. When discussing the Iran-Iraq war Sir Frank Cooper stated:

> I think Britain had a lot of difficulty in deciding whether to be pro-Iran or pro-Iraq or neutral. I also think that at the beginning of that period when the United States' relations with Iran were deteriorating ... we tended to be more pro-Iran rather than pro-Iraq quite frankly. Strategically we had had a very long relationship with Iran as indeed we had with Iraq, but due to our commercial interests in the Persian Gulf, we saw Iran very much as a bulwark against the expansion of Soviet communism ... we had been a major supporter of the Shah, we sold a lot of goods, military and civilian ... [but] ... Yes I think we were worried ... but I think we hoped to contain the situation by keeping a relatively low profile – and we hoped that this way we might re-establish a relationship.[133]

In view of Iran's key position in the Gulf, the British Government was anxious to preserve good diplomatic relations with the new Iranian regime. However, Iran's anti-Western attitude meant that it failed to respond to British advances, and the analysis of Iran's "fundamentalist" nature as a threat to the Gulf region and, therefore, British interests (also recognised by the academic community) were apparent in numerous statements by Government officials.

As Hurd stated:

> Iran is an important country in the Middle East, an important country in our eyes, and we would wish to return to our traditional friendship with it. But it is necessary to say ... that it is not possible to return to the kind of friendship that we would like while certain things are happening' (a reference to the detention of British subjects).[134] In addition, when questioned about the threat of Iranian expansion in the Gulf region, Hurd's response confirmed the British Government's concern: 'we have certainly been worried by some aspects of Iranian activity ... in the Gulf.[135]

And during a personal interview he stated:

> Threats to the region were taken very seriously - our analysis was that the Gulf was threatened - Iran and particularly its dispute over the Islands with the UAE (Abu Musa) clearly was a threat which to some extent started under the Shah - his position over Bahrain was never very clear - and the threat continued and certainly became more practicable[136]

Lord Carrington is more specific about the threat of Islamic Fundamentalism in his memoirs:

> 'There was the rise of Islamic Fundamentalism, which had found violent expression in the overthrow of the Shah and which was causing explosive polarisation throughout most of the Arab lands – polarisation between 'moderates' and others, but by no means eliminating conflict

between different 'immoderates', as was soon evident in the Iran-Iraq war'.[137]

Francis Pym in *The Politics of Consent* identified the creation of the state of Israel and the effects of that on the Arab world, and the upsurge of Muslim fundamentalism as the two main problems confronting the Middle East '... I feel that the second poses the greater medium term threat ...'[138]

There was also concern in the West at the time of the Revolution that links between the Soviet Union and Iran might be forged. As Hiro observed, economic ties between the two neighbours had gradually strengthened over the 1960s and 70s. These culminated in a 'five-year economic agreement between Tehran and Moscow signed in 1976 [that] visualised transactions worth $3 billion'.[139] Immediately following the Revolution, Moscow called on leftist groups within Iran (such as the *Tudeh)* to support Khomeini in his drive to oust the last supporter of the Shah. As Hiro went on to state: 'During the subsequent days and weeks while Western media gave an impression of chaos prevailing in Iran, Soviet media stressed the positive side' and in giving support to Khomeini 'Moscow hoped that [he] would steer Iran away from the Western camp and into the non-aligned community of nations'.[140]

The possibility of a warming of relations between the Soviet Union and Iran did not escape politicians in Whitehall, who were already concerned about the wider implications of the Iranian Revolution. As Minister Hurd was to state in 1980 when answering questions on Iran's internal situation: 'I think that this is a very worrying aspect of the situation. Obviously, these centrifugal forces have been going on for some time. They have received an added impetus since the Revolution and they are difficult to deal with. They do provide an opportunity to the Soviet Union ...'[141]

The subsequent Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, however, changed the situation considerably. Iran saw this as a hostile action, not only against Afghanistan itself, but also against the Islamic world in general. This led to Khomeini's declaration on the eve of the Iranian New Year that: 'We are the enemies of international communism in the same way as we are against the world predators of the West, headed by the United States'.[142] Such statements by Khomeini were welcomed by British politicians as signs that Iran did not favour Moscow, but they were aware that there was considerable internal turmoil in Iran and wary of the possible influence of the more organised leftist groups such as Tudeh: As Hurd was to state: 'There are several left wing groups. The Tudeh party, which is the best known, obviously does

have, and has had for a long time, close links with Moscow. It is highly organised and active'.[143]

### *b) Conflict in the Region*

Conflict in the region in the form of the Iran-Iraq war constitutes another important internal threat, which from the moment of Iraq's invasion in September 1980 till the ceasefire in 1988 threatened not only neutral merchant shipping but was also in danger of spilling over into the important GCC states. This section will seek to examine some key issues in a general context. To what extent was the British government concerned that the war would destabilise the entire region? This was particularly relevant since, as long as the war continued, Islamic fundamentalism, as manifest in the Iranian Revolution, was seen as posing a threat to the integrity and internal stability of the GCC States and Iraq. A further factor was that the closure of the important Strait of Hormuz through which were transported most of the free world's oil supplies remained a possibility as long as the war continued. Iran and Iraq's attacks on neutral merchant shipping through the Gulf of Oman and the remainder of the Persian Gulf meant that the principle of the freedom of navigation of international waters had come under threat. The discourse will be analysed, therefore, in order to highlight to what extent Britain felt that its considerable investment and trade interests in the GCC States could be threatened both by an extension of the war and by the possibility of political upheaval as a result of internal subversion, as manifest in the Iranian Revolution.

Chapter 1 established some of the background to the Iran-Iraq war. This section will now highlight the most critical features of the conflict and their effect on British policy. The official British stance was one of declared impartiality, centring on attempts to end the war through their support for various UN Resolutions. As Sir Geoffrey Howe stated: 'We remain strictly impartial in the conflict between Iran and Iraq – the underlying cause of tension in the Gulf – and are working for immediate implementation of Security Council Resolution 598, which provides for a ceasefire and negotiated settlement'.[144] President Carter's declaration in the form of the Carter Doctrine indicated the strategic importance of the Gulf and reflected a belief that the oil supplies and trade routes needed to be protected. The continuing anxiety in London, Washington, and other Western capitals and Gulf States was also based upon

a fear that the Gulf war could possibly spread to the moderate pro-Western States in the Gulf. In Britain's case there is considerable evidence to confirm this anxiety. As Francis Pym stated: 'This is a conflict over which we can claim little or no influence, but it is still a potential threat to our interests and to the security of some of our friends in the region ...'[145] A memorandum from the FCO to the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee confirmed this view: 'Only when fighting by land, sea and air stops, achieving a total ceasefire, will the present dangerous instability in the wider region be removed ... soundly-based economic, and political growth in the region and security of oil supplies at stable prices is in everyone's interests and remains a prime objective for the UK'.[146]

Another wider consequence of the war was its direct threat to British shipping. Following the Iraqi invasion of Iran in September 1980 the war proceeded through various phases, each of which had an effect on British policy in view of the threat to neutral shipping. The initial invasion resulted in the setting up of the Armilla Patrol, the original purpose of which was to provide reassurance to British merchant shipping in the Gulf. Iraq's conduct of war, however, subsequently centred around attempts to bring economic pressure on Iran by limiting its oil output and increasing the costs of its exports. From 1984 this was attempted by attacking foreign vessels serving Iran's main export terminal at Kharg Island. When Iran moved these port facilities further away to Larak Island in 1986, Iraq shifted its attack there. Iran's response to these attacks at sea was to target, contrary to International Law (according to British statements), shipping serving neutral countries, thereby endangering merchant ships, including British vessels. Iran's attack methods included fixed wing aircraft, helicopter gunships and, from 1986 onwards, surface-to-surface missiles, mainly off the coasts of Kuwait and the UAE, thereby highlighting the wider dangers of the conflict. In early 1987 Iran also began to use Chinese manufactured Silkworm missiles and subsequently planted mines off the coasts of Kuwait and Fujairah. It was these Iranian activities which particularly threatened the Gulf's wider stability and consequently were a main cause for concern for Britain (and other Western States). The extent of this concern was demonstrated by the British Government's extension of the Armilla Patrol's mode of operations (see Section 3), and is further confirmed by the following statement: 'Attacks on shipping are at present the most dangerous symptom of that tension ... [there is an] urgent need not only for a settlement of the conflict as a whole, but also for a halt to attacks on ships in the Gulf. It is vital to

uphold the principle of freedom of navigation, and the Armilla Patrol continues to play its part by providing protection for British vessels'.[147]

The perceived threats posed by Iran's anti-Western fundamentalist regime were dealt with earlier. In the context of the war these came to be considered even more serious. The Shi'ite revolutionary regime was considered as being more of a threat than the Ba'thists in Iraq. The danger to the region was particularly manifest in Ayatollah Khomeini's expansionist policy, since his declared objective was to establish an Islamic community which transcended state boundaries. There was the possibility of appeal for the revolution in all GCC States: 30 percent of Kuwait's population of 1.7 million was Shi'ite; there was a significant Shi'ite minority in the key oil-producing eastern province in Saudi Arabia; Shi'ites were a majority in Iraq and Bahrain; and the UAE was highly exposed to influence from Iran because of close trading links and the sizeable expatriate Persian communities.[148] As is apparent from the following FCO memorandum, the British Government therefore saw Iran as posing a significant fundamentalist threat: 'Important circles in Iran are committed to the export of those Islamic principles on which the Iranian Revolution was based. This involves both propaganda and material support for selected dissident (particularly Shia) elements abroad'.[149] In view of the unpredictable outcome of the war, these fears were heightened, as it was possible to foresee serious consequences for British interests in the case of an Iranian victory.

The conflict lasted for nearly eight years, during which Britain expressed its concern in a number of ways. Most of these will be dealt with in Section 3, but here it is important to highlight Britain's support for UN Resolutions, particularly Security Council Resolutions (SCR) 582 and 598. Resolution 582 called, among other things, for an immediate ceasefire. The war was to continue, however, and most British Government statements reflected the frustration felt, both as a result of the failure of the belligerents to agree to a ceasefire, and as a result of the lack of any British or Western influence over the two warring nations.[150] The war in fact continued until Iran finally agreed to sign Resolution 598 in 1988. Sir Geoffrey Howe stated in 1987 that the adoption by the Security Council of this particular Resolution owed 'much to British initiative and [was] the culmination of many months work', thus indicating the efforts expended by Britain in attempting to arrange a ceasefire.[151] In addition to demanding an immediate ceasefire, the Resolution was designed to demonstrate the

impartiality of the international community, as it was claimed that SCR 598 was balanced and favoured neither of the parties.

Nevertheless, the British Government clearly blamed the Iranian regime for the continuation of the war. Iran's refusal to accept SCR 598, even though by this stage Iraq had agreed to abide by its guidelines, centred around Iran's attempts to persuade the international community that since Iraq had instigated the initial invasion there ought not to be any question of Iranian war reparations. As the following statement shows, however, Iran was blamed quite early on during the conflict for wishing to continue the war. Pym's statement also hints at the premise that the British Government had begun to regard Iran as the more serious threat.

> It seems that Iran and Khomeini are determined to continue with the war. They have recovered most of their country which was taken by Iraq earlier on in the campaign and only a few pockets of Iraqis remain in Iran. The Iranians have moved into Iraq and occupied some of their country and they are determined to continue the war ... there does not seem any way of stopping their desire to fight this war ...[152]

In the event of non-compliance with the principles of SCR 598, Britain and the other permanent members of the Security Council agreed, at a meeting in New York on 25 September 1987, on a "twin track" approach to ending the conflict. Iran's refusal to sign led to work on the second track of enforcement measures, namely the establishment and subsequent imposition of a mandatory arms embargo in an attempt to enforce compliance. The emphasis on Iran in the following statement by Sir Geoffrey Howe further supports the argument that Iran was considered a more serious threat than Iraq.

> We have impressed upon Iraq the need to refrain from attacks upon shipping in the Gulf, and it has done so for periods of several weeks at a time. Subsequently, it has also been clear that Iraq accepts and will implement resolution 598 if the Iranians do so, but Iran has neither accepted nor rejected the resolution, which is why all of us ... recognised the need to maintain the pressure for an arms embargo in relation to Iran primarily, although not exclusively.[153]

By the FCO's own admission, Iran saw Britain as a major Western power to be distrusted because of its close association with the Shah and the US. The UK was, therefore, seen by Iran as being increasingly pro-Iraq, and the fact that there was an element of truth to this belief is demonstrated by the following quote by David Mellor:

> ... of course we try to be impartial ... but that does not mean ... that our judgements on both sides have always got to be the same ... there is no pre-built in tilt against Iran but facts increasingly have driven us to make statements that are critical of Iran ...

and

> ... in terms of our support for moderate, sensible governments in the region we are not in any sense impartial ... we are bound by strong ties of friendship with the Gulf countries, all of whom are moderately and sensibly led. It is plainly a key part of our strategy to do all we can to maintain support for those governments [which] are fundamentally opposed to fundamentalism...[154]

Statements such as those highlighted in this section show that key politicians were increasingly concerned that the war was destabilising the region and therefore could be seen as constituting a threat to British interests in the GCC States. Not only was the war geographically close, other factors such as Iran's form of Islamic fundamentalism and its reluctance to sign UN Resolutions also formed part of the matrix which could have heightened Britain's anxiety. Attention now turns to external threats, in particular those associated with the Soviet Union, which were also causing considerable concern during the period in question.

**Section 2.2: External Threats**

The discourse includes regular and prominent references to the British government's perception that a Soviet threat existed had to be taken seriously, and one aspect of this was Britain's perception that there was an actual Soviet threat to its interests in the Gulf region. The British Government's concern with Soviet expansion stemmed from two inter-linked factors, the first being the West's belief that, despite détente, the Soviet Union 'continued to pursue a policy of expansion and subversion wherever they ... felt they could do so with impunity'.[155] The second was a direct consequence of the Soviet Union's failure to accumulate further power in Europe in the face of NATO's resolve. The British Government saw this as the reason behind the attention which the Soviets had begun to focus on the Third World. As Peter Blaker stated at the time, 'I think it is because NATO has shown determination and solidarity in Europe ... that the attention of the Soviet Union has increasingly been diverted to the possibilities for expansion in the Third World'.[156] The *1980 Defence White Paper*, for example, highlights the aggressive motive behind the Soviet Marxist-Leninist philosophy, a basic tenet of which was to extend communism to every nation by

military means if necessary.[157] The Soviet Union had already demonstrated the use of force in Eastern Europe and its invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was the 'first example of military intervention to ensure a Soviet hold on a country outside the Warsaw Pact'.[158]

Indeed, Afghanistan could be perceived as the culmination of a series of proxy interventions undertaken in a number of Third World countries, since it followed Soviet support for the MPLA in Angola, for Colonel Mengistu against the Somalis in Ethiopia, their backing for the pro-Soviet South Yemeni attack on North Yemen in 1979, and the joint invasion of Kampuchea with Vietnam. Therefore, as Williams pointed out to the Foreign Affairs Committee, the main reason that Afghanistan 'caused such alarm in the West was the change in Soviet tactics: Moscow, for the first time, had gone beyond the use of proxies to direct military intervention outside Eastern Europe'.[159] An FCO memorandum, also to the Foreign Affairs Committee, confirmed this, by stating that Afghanistan represented a departure because 'for the first time since 1945 Soviet combat troops were used in large numbers outside the Warsaw Pact'.[160]

According to Williams, Britain's security interests and foreign policy objectives revolved primarily around Europe, and Soviet-British relations were merely an element of this. However, he went on to stress that Soviet actions in the Third World could also impinge upon the relationship and so could not be overlooked.[161] One contributing factor was the significant Soviet military build-up, not just in Europe, but also elsewhere. It was normal practice for the Conservative Government to draw detailed comparisons between the forces of NATO and Warsaw Pact nations in all annual *Defence White Papers*.[162] No further discussion of these details is necessary here, therefore, but there had been a three-fold increase in the Soviet navy since 1968: during this time it had developed into a major ocean going fleet and this was seen as a major indicator of growing Soviet interests in the global projection of power.[163]

The Soviet threat was no longer confined to Europe, therefore, and its invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 could be construed as representing an attempt by the Soviet Union to shift its attention to regions other than Europe. Sir Clive Whitmore, who admitted that it was natural enough to translate the threat from the Warsaw Pact into a threat to Europe because of Britain's geographical position, also stated that 'the Soviet Union operate[d] on a global basis, and from time to time [Britain would]

undoubtedly see its interests threatened outside Europe by the activities of the Soviet Union'.[164]

It is possible to understand, therefore, that East-West relations had begun to deteriorate even before 1979. Concern over factors such as differing perceptions over the meaning of détente, continuing Soviet pressure on the Third World, and the Soviet failure to implement the Helsinki Final Act was heightened following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Not only did the invasion seem to confirm Western disillusion with the détente process, it also appeared to represent a Soviet attempt to extend rather than merely entrench Soviet hegemony. The invasion brought the process of détente to a halt and led to President Carter's decision to withdraw the SALT II Treaty from consideration by the US Senate. As Malcolm Rifkind was to state at the time: 'The Soviet Union has always been opportunistic and whenever it has found an opportunity to extent its power and influence without too heavy a price it has been happy to take it ...'[165] In addition the *1981 Defence White Paper* stated that it was the association of immense military power with a hostile and expansionist Marxist-Leninist ideology which still determined Soviet official attitudes. In addition, 'The Soviet leadership continually reaffirms its adherence to the teachings of Lenin, whose recurring theme is the inevitable triumph of communism over capitalism ... Experience suggests ... that we cannot be confident the Soviet Union will be content with peaceful competition'.[166]

Statements such as these show that the British Government perceived the threat from the Soviet Union to be serious and its invasion of Afghanistan needs to be seen in the context of a general global extension on the part of the Soviets during the 1970s. However, it is also necessary to place this in the context of the belief within the British government that the invasion was a more specific threat to the Gulf region than any previous Soviet action. As statements by Mrs. Thatcher herself will show, the Government appeared concerned that the Soviet Union was extending its influence towards this region.

The traditional arguments for the invasion of Afghanistan revolved around Soviet sensitivities to instability on its borders, its northerly position depriving it of warm water ports, and culminating in the argument that since the 1960s the Soviet Union had sought base facilities in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. In addition, certain academics raised the possibility that, despite having extensive petroleum reserves, the Soviet Union would be faced with a shortage due to its

inability to access such fields as those in Siberia. As Gill argued, the 'Kremlin may, therefore, take a more urgent interest in securing oil from the Middle East. Soviet policy-makers know the economic advantages of importing oil from the Middle East, and must be considering ... an active turn towards external sources'.[167] Beyond these traditional viewpoints Williams identified two specific schools of thought. The former emphasised opportunism in Soviet policy but the absence of a master plan. This viewpoint suggested that a series of events during the 1970s had provided unique opportunities for the Soviet Union to extend its influence. The latter, on the other hand, regarded the Soviet threat as much more serious. Although it accepted the opportunistic nature of Soviet policy during the 70s and early 80s, it saw this 'opportunism as occurring within a framework of Soviet expansionism through both direct and indirect means...' arguing that 'ideological impulses [had] once again come to the fore'.[168] This viewpoint is further supported by Conquest, who saw no reason to doubt that the ultimate Soviet aim was the extension of socialism and that their moves in Angola, Ethiopia and Afghanistan were 'certainly part of a Soviet decision, apparently reached around 1965, to act on a world scale'.[169]

Various elements within the British Government appeared to subscribe to one or the other of these viewpoints. The *Defence White Papers* for instance referred to the continuation of expansionist Marxist-Leninist ideology through the use of force if necessary[170] and Williams had also pointed out that this ideology had recently resurfaced. This would seem to be adherence to the alarmist school of thought, as would the following statement by Mrs Thatcher:

> ... The West had for some time been anxious that the Soviets would make a drive for the oil in the Gulf. And the energy crisis gave them still a stronger reason to do so ... Perhaps I was less shocked than some ... I had long understood that détente had been ruthlessly used by the Soviets to exploit Western weakness ... What had happened in Afghanistan was only part of a wider pattern ...[171]

On the other hand, there was also a view that the invasion was essentially defensive in nature arising from a desire to protect boundaries and that, although there was a basic expansionist tendency in Soviet actions, opportunism was the guiding force. Warhurst confirms this by stating that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was not a threat to Western interests, and that the West had over-reacted by 'ignoring the significance of the invasion for it proved the failure of Soviet foreign policy in an area that the Soviet Union considered vital to its interests.[172] In addition, the Foreign

Affairs Committee concluded that, while carefully planned, the invasion did not represent part of a grand strategy to reach warm water ports in the Middle East or control Western oil and trade routes.[173]

When Peter Blaker was questioned about the significance of the invasion, he replied, '... the Soviet action in Afghanistan ... gives the Russians more opportunities for activity in South West Asia, which, of course, is ... sensitive ... in relation to the supply of oil', and his response when questioned further about the possibility of the Soviets taking over the oil by force highlights the fact that British politicians were aware of the differing interpretations of Soviet motives: 'It depends what view you take about Soviet motivation. I am inclined to be rather cautious in my interpretation ... I believe that they are inclined, if presented with the opportunity of taking action which is detrimental to the non-communist world, to be unable to resist the temptation to take that action'.[174]

As the above illustrates it is impossible to be conclusive about Soviet motivations in Afghanistan. However, there is no doubt that the British Government collectively viewed the Soviet invasion as a seriously destabilising factor for the Persian Gulf. The FCO suggested that 'The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan could undermine stability in the surrounding region. There is now a palpable threat to the integrity of the neighbouring states ...'[175]

The Government's reply to the voluminous Fifth Foreign Affairs Committee Report of Session 1979-80 concluded that there had been no evidence to suggest that the invasion of Afghanistan had been part of a Soviet grand strategy to extend its influence to the Persian Gulf. However, the reply also advocated the need for Western policy to take account of the Soviet Union's willingness to use force to further its own objectives at the expense of Western interests. Furthermore, with the Soviet Union in control of Afghanistan, the Government admitted that it was now 'better placed to promote instability in South Asia and the Gulf area. Soviet forces are closer to the Gulf and this has made a significant difference to the balance of forces in the region'.[176]

In a speech in New York in December 1979 Mrs Thatcher also confirmed that it was not possible to determine Soviet motivations but went on to state that 'the fact is that the Russians have the weapons and are getting more of them. It is simple prudence for the West to responsd'.[177] She thereby highlighted the fact that whatever the motivation for the invasion, the Soviet Union was seen as representing a threat to

British interests and some form of British response could be expected. Attention now turns, therefore, to the various British responses to the threats perceived in the Gulf region between 1979 and 1988.

**Section 3: The British Response and developing Military Presence**

The discourse analysed in this chapter has demonstrated how prominently commercial interests featured in many sources during the period 1979-1988. The discourse has included statements by politicians, including key government figures such as Douglas Hurd, Francis Pym, Geoffrey Howe, amongst others and also Mrs. Thatcher herself. Though there is no doubt that the Government regarded the region as important, the question of whether economic factors alone shaped British foreign policy has not been proved. The importance attached by Britain to the region, however, calls for further analysis of the discourse of this period to identify suggestions that this invited some form of British military connection with the region.

At the time of Mrs Thatcher's first trip to the Gulf States at the start of the 1980s Douglas Hurd was to state:

> Britain has not been taking a friendly and intelligent interest in that part of the world. We have let it slip ... commercially, others have come in and snapped up the big opportunities. Politically, we have taken it for granted. We have not kept in close touch with the rulers ... [but Mrs Thatcher] was received with enthusiasm. I do not doubt that the effect of the visit ... will be substantial. It is an example of a timely and successful visit to a part of the world that is enormously important to us.[178]

Both chapters 1 and 2 have highlighted that the region was beset by considerable turmoil in the form of internal and external threats, which invited some form of British response. Personal interviews with both Lord Douglas Hurd and Sir Alan Munro were very useful sources of information in this context. Sir Alan Munro, who in his position as the Head of the Middle East Department in 1979, spanned the change in Government from Labour to Conservative and was therefore in a position to witness at first hand the change in policy towards the Gulf region.

He described British policy during the Labour Government as one of 'coasting, of riding in neutral', but from the beginning of 1979 when Khomeini returned to Iran Sir Alan Munro specified that 'to us [Middle Easterners] in the Foreign Office there was a renewed cause for nervousness, on the part of the Arab

States in the Gulf, in the face of this new burst of ... Islamic radicalism ... both in terms of stability of those states themselves and of our considerable economic (including access to oil) and trading interests'.[179] In his opinion, Labour politicians, such as David Owen and Frank Judd, who were responsible for Middle Eastern affairs, had reservations about too close a political association with the Gulf States.

In fact 'it wasn't until the changeover to a Conservative Government and the appearance of Lord Carrington as Foreign Secretary and Douglas Hurd as Minister of State, that these ideas for a shift in policy were given support at the political level'.[180] He went on to state, that had there not been a change in Government, the shift in policy towards the Gulf States would have taken considerably longer. This change in policy took a definite form, as it was believed that a higher profile in military advice and supply was necessary in order to strengthen the Gulf States' defence capabilities. The British had already played a significant advisory role in Saudi Arabia and were eager to emulate this elsewhere in the Gulf.[181]

Further indications that Britain was to play a more significant role in the Persian Gulf region with the arrival of the Conservatives were provided by Lord Douglas Hurd during a personal interview. As he was Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs at the start of Mrs. Thatcher's Administration he is particularly well placed to confirm this shift in policy:

> I think there is some truth in it - that Conservative Ministers tend to be rather more sympathetic to the Gulf and the people around the Gulf - I went there myself with Ted Heath in 1969/70 and so I knew it a bit and Peter Carrington gave it to me as the Minister of State - as actually the main area of my responsibility ... and I did travel there quite a lot during 1979-83, and always with great pleasure - I went to all the Emirates of the UAE - which I don't think had been done before and I think it is true we were more active and of course there is the commercial angle to that - we were in very keen competition with the French and the Americans - but there was the feeling on our part that this was a very important part of the world where there were a lot of British people involved and rightly we encouraged that.

In comparing the Conservative administration with the previous Labour government he stated:

> It is true we wanted to be rather more active than our predecessors ... and Mrs. Thatcher encouraged that - she went there herself early on - in '81.[182]

British responses to the internal and external threats revolved primarily around five issues. Firstly, British support for the US decision to establish a Rapid Deployment Force (RDF); secondly, Britain's own physical presence in the region in the form of naval deployments; thirdly, the deployment of Naval Task Groups and the carrying out of various military exercises within the Persian Gulf region and Indian Ocean; fourthly, the provision of military assistance to GCC States in the form of defence sales, and secondments of military personnel; and fifthly, the provision within the British Armed Forces of elements specifically designed to conduct out-of-area operations.

The US decision to establish the RDF had its roots in US military thinking. The Strategic Army Corps (STRAC) was established in 1958 and was assigned the XVIII Airborne Corps HQ and the 82 Airborne Division. These ultimately provided the core for the RDF and subsequently the US Central Command. US involvement in Indo-China during the 1960s and 70s had meant the relegation of Middle Eastern issues. In 1978, however, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) approved the 'Review of US strategy related to the Middle East and the Persian Gulf'. This document highlighted the following as major US interests: continuous access to oil, the survival of Israel, and the prevention of other powers from establishing hegemony in the region. Consequently, the JCS were to recommend the expansion of facilities at Diego Garcia (a British owned territory in the Indian Ocean), Oman, Djibouti, and if possible Saudi Arabia. These steps were to be complemented with the projected naval force to include increases in carrier battle group deployments.

The subsequent invasion of Afghanistan also prompted President Carter to warn against further moves towards the Persian Gulf region, stating that any such 'assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force'.[183] As part of its "twin pillar" policy the US encouraged both Iran (while under the Shah) and Saudi Arabia to police the Gulf and ensure the smooth flow of oil (see chapter 1). After the Shah, however, it was unlikely that Saudi Arabia could act alone, and the RDF filled the vacuum as US and other Western navies arrived in the Persian Gulf.[184] There were also reports that the US was in the process of negotiating with various Gulf States regarding the setting up of bases on their territory. In particular, US discussions with Oman resulted in a military and economic agreement which gave the US access to Omani air and seaport facilities following consultation, such as those on Masira Island off the coast of Oman.[185] It was apparent that both Britain and the US

wished to maintain stability in Oman because in the face of increased potential for Soviet subversion the Sultanate was increasingly perceived as a maritime barrier between East and West.[186] The British connection with Oman was strengthened by the fact that Britain had loan service personnel actually integrated into the Omani armed forces.[187]

Britain's support for the US decision to increase forces in the Persian Gulf was reiterated during Mrs. Thatcher's trip to the US in early 1981. As stated by the Prime Minister '... I said that Britain shared the determination of the United States ... to prevent Soviet encroachment in the region. We discussed the possible creation of a rapid deployment force, which would be available for use ... in an emergency in this or other areas of the world ... I made it clear ... [that] the United Kingdom would be ready to contribute to it ...'[188]

The Soviet Union's presence in Afghanistan meant that they now had an air strike capability covering the approaches to the Gulf. There were also large contingents of Soviet and Cuban troops in South Yemen, and geographically this gave the impression of a Soviet encirclement of the Gulf region, particularly since there were substantial Soviet air and naval detachments in the area. The recognition in Western capitals of the gravity of the situation prompted a NATO-wide debate over an appropriate response. As Lord Carrington was to state: '... unless we can remedy the situation, and neutralise Afghanistan there will always be that constant threat in that part of the world'.[189] The extension of NATO's remit beyond its traditional borders was not, however, considered appropriate, but there was a recognition at the NATO Defence Planning Committee (DPC) meeting in December 1980 that there was no reason why individual NATO members could not contribute to the RDF. Britain's decision to extend facilities at Diego Garcia for use by American forces, for instance, was frequently referred to as an important British contribution to the operations of the RDF in the Indian Ocean.[190] Runways on the island were enlarged to enable handling of the US long-range B52 bomber, since although at over 2,000 miles from the Straits of Hormuz the Island was not close, it was envisaged that a base there could provide support for any operations in the Persian Gulf.[191] Furthermore, reports in a December 1985 issue of *Jane's Defence Weekly* indicated that Britain itself had a smaller equivalent of the RDF, a brigade based in Saudi Arabia, to which Oman was contributing. This reinforced the extent of Britain's co-operation with Oman and the British presence in the region.[192]

Despite various statements indicating British support for the RDF, Britain's commitments have to be considered in the context of limited resources. As Lord Carrington was to state at the time: 'I think it is ludicrous to suppose we can do big stuff. We have our forces committed to NATO. What we would be doing, if we could do anything, would be on a comparatively small scale ...'[193] Despite limited resources, however, because of the serious threat to Britain's interests in the Persian Gulf caused by both the Iran-Iraq war and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, there was a recognition that provisions had to be made for out-of-area operations. The steps that were taken revolved around increasing the flexibility of existing resources, with the main objective being to minimise costs. These measures will be analysed in detail later, but the first major step that the British took was the establishment of the Armilla Patrol.

The outbreak of the Gulf war in September 1980 led to the British Government reviewing the situation in the Persian Gulf, as the safety of British shipping in the region was causing considerable concern, and it was decided to provide reassurance to such shipping by dispatching 2 Royal Navy warships to the area. These warships were part of a task group which had been visiting the Far East at the time, and were now to take up position in the Gulf of Oman, thereby assuring any British shipping under threat that assistance was at hand. The first ships were in place by October 1980 and the British Government later deployed replacements together with afloat supplies. This was the beginning of Operation Armilla (see Appendix 5 for a map of the region).

Initially the role of these ships was merely to remain in position, and provide a visible naval presence to British merchant ships as they entered the Gulf. The knowledge that they would be prepared to move into the Gulf itself to provide assistance if necessary was an encouragement to shipping to continue to pass through the Strait of Hormuz.[194]

The increase in threat to shipping in November 1986 (see section 2.1 b), however, led to an announcement by the Defence Secretary that the Patrol would spend more time in Gulf waters. A further response to the increased attacks on neutral shipping came about early in 1987, when a third Royal Navy warship was assigned to the region. This reflected the decision to adopt a more direct form of protection for British merchant shipping as, from then on, Armilla vessels accompanied more regularly British or Dependent Territory owned or flagged merchant traffic through

the most threatened areas. The extent to which this was considered necessary can be seen from the fact that in 1987 alone a total of 405 passages were made, a higher figure than in the case of any other Western navy.

Despite this raised profile, Armilla vessels did not convoy merchant ships or provide close escort for them, as their operations remained non-provocative and de-escalatory. They were prepared, however, to defend both themselves and any merchant shipping entitled to their protection, in addition to providing humanitarian assistance to foreign ships in distress following attack.

From mid-August 1987, a further consideration for the Patrol became the presence of Iranian mines in the region, and the British Government decided that Armilla should be equipped with mine-sweeping capabilities. This development, Operation CIMNEL, led to four Hunt Class MCMVs and support ships being dispatched to join the Patrol in mid-September 1987, where they subsequently carried out mine clearance operations at Fujairah, off Dubai and north of Qatar, detecting and destroying a total of 10 mines.[195]

The Armilla Patrol provided an actual British presence in the Gulf and demonstrated that the British government was concerned with contributing to the stability of the region. Although it consisted of only one duty ship, one standby, and one off-station,[196] entitled shipping was accompanied through the Silkworm danger zone and the Iranian patrolled area to a point 40 miles north of Dubai. Armilla's central role, therefore, was the protection of British merchant shipping, but it was also a valuable asset in terms of British relations with the GCC States.

The British government perceived that the patrol also provided political and commercial benefits. Politically, its presence underlined Britain's commitment to and co-operation with the GCC States during an unstable period when support was valuable. Commercially, the benefits stemmed from the nature of the Gulf States' highly personalised leadership systems, whose perceived view of the foreign policy of countries was crucial when trading. Britain already had a trade advantage in view of its established relationship with states in the region, but the awarding of major trade contracts depended on many factors and, as the reliability of a firm's country and the political stand of its government were extremely influential, Britain's continuing support in the form of Armilla was particularly important. Ian Stewart (the then Minister of State for Defence) reconfirmed Armilla's roles and objectives by stating '... we viewed the Armilla Patrol as a source of reassurance and a contribution to

stability of that area ... The purpose of their presence [was] entirely defensive and fully in accordance with the non-provocative objectives to our mission. In protecting the right to freedom of navigation through international waters, we [were] operating in the interests of all seafaring nations.[197]

Finally, the effectiveness of the Armilla Patrol was openly stressed by British politicians as in the following quote by David Mellor: '... the persistent attempts by the Iranians to spread the hostilities across the Gulf, to attack international shipping that is simply using the right of passage to carry on international trade and to attack installations that belong to countries ... not participating in this war is wholly unacceptable. The only reason why we have not seen more of this Iranian action is the presence of [US], British, and other naval forces in the Gulf.[198] It was also the case that since attacks on merchant shipping began no vessels being escorted by the Armilla Patrol had been attacked[199].

The Armilla Patrol was set up as a direct consequence of the immediate threat to the Gulf. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had reflected an increase in the capability and determination of the Soviet Union to act on a world-wide scale, and led to the British Government reviewing its own forces' ability to act outside the area of NATO's jurisdiction. The need for such a review was reinforced by the commencement of the Iran-Iraq war, (and later the Argentinean invasion of the Falklands) and the combination of these events convinced the British Government that some out-of-area capability was necessary.[200]

The following analysis will highlight the main elements which contributed to Britain's developing out-of-area ability, namely, the deployment of Naval Task Groups and the carrying out of military exercises, the provision of military assistance to GCC States, and the provision within the British armed forces of elements specifically designed for out-of-area operations. These three aspects will be discussed in conjunction with each other, as they were all interlinked, and were all seen as cost effective methods of protecting British interests abroad in the face of defence budget restrictions.

Mrs. Thatcher referred to Britain's four defence roles as follows: commitments to the Central Front in Europe, the Eastern Atlantic, the defence of the home base and the strategic nuclear deterrent. She went on to state, however, 'We are also strengthening our capability to deploy out of the NATO area at short notice'.[201] This was also stressed in *Command Paper 8288* which identified Britain's first three

defence roles as, elements of strategic and theatre nuclear forces committed to the Alliance, direct homeland defence, and a maritime effort in the Eastern Atlantic and the Channel. The fourth role centred on exploiting the flexibility of Britain's Armed Forces beyond the NATO area insofar as resources permitted.[202]

These references to out-of-area activities were based upon recognition that Britain had national defence commitments further afield. Amongst the reasons cited in the *1987 Defence White Paper* as to why Britain had to retain an out-of-area capability were: firstly, Britain's historical legacy which meant that residual obligations from an imperial past remained, including, importantly, certain agreements with the Gulf States (see Appendix 1). Secondly, the *Command Paper* also stressed the importance of regional stability because of Britain's dependence on overseas commerce: '... we are still vulnerable to interruptions in the supply of certain commodities, such as oil and strategic minerals, from remoter parts of the world. Helping to maintain stability and ensure the free use of the seas is therefore very much in our interests'.[203]

Despite the commitment to NATO, therefore, the British Government had wider defence interests which went beyond the NATO boundaries, such as those in the Gulf. The existence of these wider interests was regularly referred to in the *Defence White Papers* published during the 1980s, and the importance placed upon them is confirmed by the steps that the Government took. The 1981 White Paper formalised these as being: defence assistance, deployments, and intervention capability.[204]

Defence assistance took several different forms including advisory visits, the provision of technical aid and the loan of service personnel to undertake training programmes in Britain and overseas. The scale of these training programmes becomes apparent when it is realised that in one year alone (1979-80) the number of students from non-NATO countries who were being trained at MOD establishments was as high as 4000.

In addition to their practical value, these training programmes were also an important means of maintaining good relations between the UK and the countries involved, and it is therefore not surprising that the British Government was eager to continue to use them. The loan of service personnel was beneficial not only to the UK's own strategic interests, but also in terms of the UK's defence relationship with various countries, and the Government openly admitted that the goodwill engendered

as a result of such training programmes was an important cost effective element in its relationship with many countries, such as Oman, which lay outside NATO boundaries.

In reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, for example, Carrington specified that Britain had increased the number of loaned service personnel and of military advisors to Oman in particular.[205] Hurd later confirmed this by stating: '... Inside the Gulf we have a number of loan personnel, officers who are helping the Gulf States, including Oman, to organise their security. These are not enormous forces ... though we should continue to maintain them within our defence budget and in spite of the difficulties which we have with the defence budget'.[206] A report as far back as 1977 highlighted the continuing British presence in Oman. Despite the withdrawal the British presence was transformed into an unofficial one and, as the report suggested, the British military facilities were not to be dismantled and would ultimately be put at the disposal of the British and the US. As subsequent analysis has shown British officers retained positions of high sensitivity in the Omani Armed Forces and the US managed to negotiate the use of Omani facilities.[207]

In addition to the benefits which they provided in terms of the British economy (see chapter 2 Section 1.2 b), defence sales were perceived as an important means of establishing links with significant countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Oman and other GCC States. They were also believed to contribute to the general stability of the region by enabling the countries concerned to build defensive elements to protect their own interests.

A detailed examination of Britain's practice of providing overseas military assistance appeared in the *1985 Defence White Paper*. This stated that there were over 1000 servicemen undertaking the training of foreign students in over 70 non-NATO countries with a sizeable number of 200 based in Oman. The importance of Britain's relationship with Oman is further indicated by the fact that the British loan servicemen were actually integrated into the Omani Armed Forces and held a number of key operations and command appointments.[208] Lord Carrington's visit to Oman in 1980 had resulted in a re-commitment to continue defence and strategic support for the Sultanate, which at the time included the delivery of another squadron of Jaguar multi-purpose fighters to complement an existing squadron. The visit also resulted in Omani requests for other naval and army equipment such as fast patrol boats, mine-sweepers, sonic detectors and helicopters. Later, John Nott's visit (in his position as

Defence Minister) further strengthened Britain's role in Oman as the number of British officers serving there was subsequently significantly increased. Also the Omani decision to switch from the US M60 tank to British Chieftains meant that new training and maintenance teams would be needed for the foreseeable future.[209] Furthermore, in 1981 the appointment of Sir Timothy Creasey – the former Commander of British Land Forces – as officer in charge of Omani defence operations, further indicated the British government's wish to retain a role in the Gulf and with Oman. Later at the end of 1984, a former SAS Commander (of the 22 SAS Regiment), Major General John Watts, succeeded Creasey as the Chief of Defence Staff in Oman. This new appointment further consolidated the close defence relations between Britain and Oman.[210] In addition, other service teams operated in the Gulf providing, for instance, assistance with the introduction of Rapier missiles in Qatar, and Hawk aircraft in the United Arab Emirates.[211] The British government perceived such measures as a low cost method of retaining a degree of influence in the region.

Deployments of military forces around the world, including the Persian Gulf, constituted the second element in Britain's arsenal for safeguarding its out-of-area interests. The declared purpose behind such deployments was to add to the Services' annual training cycle, help maintain links with allies, and importantly, demonstrate Britain's continued interest and support in particular regions.[212] The *Defence White Paper* also stated that the Royal Navy task group undertook a major deployment outside the NATO area once a year.[213] It was because of such deployments that Britain was able to respond to the need for a naval presence in the Gulf of Oman (in the form of the Armilla Patrol and Operation CIMNEL ) when the outbreak of war between Iran and Iraq raised the possibility of a threat to the freedom of passage for merchant ships through the Gulf.

Endnote 213 highlights some of the deployments and exercises which were carried out by the British Armed Forces outside the NATO area during the period 1979-88. The intention of such exercises was to demonstrate Britain's capability for rapid deployment overseas and joint operations with host countries. One such exercise formed part of Global 86's circumnavigation of the world, namely *Saif Sareea*, held in Oman in conjunction with the Sultan of Oman's Armed Forces, between 16 November and 8 December 1986. As stated in *Hansard* the 'Royal Air Force contributed Tornadoes, tankers and air transport aircraft [and] ... a fully loaded VC-10 passenger transport aircraft refuelled in mid-air from a VC-10 tanker en route to

Oman, which it reached after a non-stop flight', making RAF history.[214] Such exercises confirmed that despite budget restrictions the British Government was serious in allocating resources for developing its out-of-area capabilities. Attention, therefore, now turns to some of these provisions.

Mrs. Thatcher, while on her 1981 US trip, stated that, in the event that a Rapid Deployment Force was created, the UK would be ready to contribute to it.[215] In addition the *1980 Defence White Paper* stated that '... the Government believes that the Services should also be able to operate effectively outside the NATO area, without diminishing our central commitment to the Alliance ... certain improvements in the Services' world-wide capability are being considered ... [which] can be achieved at relatively modest cost, yet give the Services significantly more flexibility to undertake tasks outside the NATO area'.[216] The cost efficiency of these improvements to Britain's out-of-area capabilities was fundamental, as the Government was seeking to 'assume wider responsibilities without adding substantial extra resources ...'[217]

The Government insisted that due to budget restrictions it was not possible to construct a separate force able to deal with all contingencies. '... In the case of the United States, they are going to have a substantial force of a mobile nature which could be used ... in different parts of the world, but with our resources I think it is difficult for us to do that ...'[218]

Britain's intervention capability was based on the belief that a response to any emergency would be carried out in conjunction with other allies. However, the British Government was also examining options for enhancing its own out-of-area capabilities, independently of NATO. The RDF set up by the US was likewise designed to be separate from NATO. John Nott identified, in 1981, a number of areas where improvement was being planned. Firstly, there was a need for a basis for command and control and for a continuation of training in certain areas. Parachute capabilities needed to be developed and in connection with this, there was a need to improve the RAF transport facilities for the 2 parachute battalions. Britain also had the Spearhead Battalion, which was available at 72 hours notice. There was also a need to provide a stockpile of the available equipment. These plans for development were confirmed by the *1981 Defence White Paper* which included all these options.[219] This White Paper revealed plans to 'stretch' 30 RAF Hercules transport aircraft to increase the carrying capacity over short ranges by the equivalent of about eight new aircraft. These were to be fitted with station-keeping radar equipment to enable

parachute drops to be made even in poor weather. It also specified that an existing 2-Star HQ would be nominated to take command of any contingency intervention. Its role would be to remain in close contact with all formations that might be called on for out-of-area operations.[220]

The *1982 Defence White Paper* confirmed that the primary source of airlifted ground troops would remain the Spearhead battalion for deployment world-wide. It went on to state that, should further troops be required, these would be provided from units permanently stationed in the UK. For example the HQ of the Fifth Infantry Brigade was designated as the operational HQ for the training, preparation, and execution of out-of-area operations.

One of the lessons of the Falklands crisis was the importance of retaining an amphibious capability. In addition to continuing most of the above-mentioned improvements, *Command Paper 8758* earmarked 3rd Commando Brigade, and specified that the two assault ships, HMS Fearless and Intrepid, would remain in service, thereby reinforcing Britain's out-of-area amphibious capability.[221] At this time the Government also announced that two carriers would be available for deployment at short notice. To ensure this, a third carrier was to be maintained in refit and the decision to sell HMS Invincible was postponed. The Falklands crisis also contributed to the decision to acquire wide-bodied tankers to enhance the capability of the RAF's tanker force. This was designed to enhance the Armed Forces' strategic mobility[222] as the importance of air-to-air refuelling was emphasised. To facilitate this requirement, the first of the VC-10 tankers entered service in 1983, and a conversion programme to form a second squadron was also begun. Work also began to convert six ex-British Airways Tristar aircraft to provide a small force of strategic tankers to help meet out-of-area commitments.[223]

The *1984 Defence White Paper* continued this trend and announced a series of further improvements to 3rd Commando Brigade. This was now to be equipped with the Blowpipe as well as further signals, medical and logistic units. The number of parachute posts in the Brigade were also increased. In view of these improvements, the Brigade was subsequently renamed 5th Airborne Brigade.[224]

The Royal Navy's out-of-area role was also to be enhanced through the decision to make 'use of commercial vessels not built to warship standards to conduct subsidiary fleet tasks at low cost. The acquisition of RFA Diligence, an oil rig forward

support vessel, was to enhance the capability of the destroyer/frigate force operating out-of-area'.[225]

There are two important aspects, therefore, to the above improvements in Britain's out-of-area capabilities: they had to be retained to safeguard British interests, but they also had to be carried out within budget restrictions. Their existence indicated that the British Government was committed to retaining out-of-area capabilities, albeit at a low cost. This combination of military assistance, deployments, and the development of an interventionary capacity ensured that Britain was able to maintain a presence in regions of importance such as the Gulf.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has analysed in detail elements prevalent within the Thatcherite discourse in the context of policy towards the Persian Gulf during the period 1979-1988. The hypothesis presented in chapter 1 claimed that economic factors formed a significant part of that discourse and, as already highlighted, since Thatcherism was a belief system based on notions of economics, interests and incentives, that would seem to confirm a contributory role for economic factors in explaining British foreign policy towards the GCC States. What evidence has been highlighted in this chapter, therefore, to support the hypothesis? This question must be analysed from a constructivist perspective in light of the intersubjective, ideational, social, discursive and linguistic credentials inherent in this approach.

Constructivism's emphasis on ideational structures is highly relevant here, and has raised the importance of the notion of Thatcherism as a belief system espousing ideas in the context of economic interests. This chapter has sought to analyse Thatcherite discourse in an attempt to determine the extent to which economic factors featured during the period 1979-1988, as this is necessary in order to ascertain the validity of the hypothesis.

In this context, therefore, the materialist discourse identified that Britain's North Sea Oil depletion policy regarded Middle Eastern crude as important in the Government's goal to prolong high levels of UK continental shelf life production. Although the Labour Government had advocated the need for depletion control it was not until 1980 that the first actual development delays were announced. It is in this context, therefore, that the GCC States retained their significant identity as oil

exporters. As constructivism specifies, identities shape interests and in turn interests provide the framework for foreign policy.

Of course, British foreign policy was not shaped exclusively by the fact that the GCC States were oil exporters. There are other important elements linked to the identity of these states, as the discourse has highlighted. One of the foremost of these was the GCC States' importance as markets for British civilian and defence equipment, particularly in view of the problems which had beset manufacturing industry in Britain. Since British economic growth levels were the lowest in Europe, the chapter has demonstrated that numerous observers were unable to dispute the possibility that de-industrialisation was a real phenomenon in Britain. The inevitable symptoms of unemployment, import penetration, balance of payments problems and a decrease in exports of manufactured products were resulting in the impoverishment of the country. The discourse suggested that these symptoms were also recognised by the Government and led to the realisation that export opportunities needed to be developed. Indeed, the belief that Britain's economy was in decline provided the Thatcher Government with an opportunity to show that it was serious about improving the country's economic situation. The Government's drive to export more, therefore, needs to be seen in this context, since exporting defence equipment, for instance, appeared to pay dividends by supporting jobs and contributing positively to the balance of payments.

Colin Chandler's statement 'once you do succeed in a major defence sale you get other trade as well', indicated that the prospects for developing other civilian related links with the importing country were also high. Benefits to indigenous civilian sectors were also cited as a major benefit given the aggressive pace of technological development. In order to reduce the high costs involved in defence R&D there was a need to lengthen production lines to the utmost, and one important means of achieving this was to market defence equipment for export purposes. Though it remained difficult to assess the overall benefits of exporting defence products the benefits accrued were said to be even greater since official government figures excluded the so-called invisibles such as technology transfers and the employment of people who actually went abroad to work on specific projects.

The Thatcher Government therefore firmly believed that the benefits of retaining an indigenous defence industry far outweighed the costs and this was further demonstrated by the Government's defence procurement policies. During the early

1980s much attention was devoted to securing better value for money in light of increasing pressures on the defence budget. As the chapter has shown, one way of achieving this was to place much greater emphasis on the marketability of the defence industry's products with the result that the Government explicitly declared its support for defence exports. The MOD itself was heavily involved in assisting industry through the DSO, which in turn was able to draw upon the resources of the Ministry. The equipment being produced in the Royal Ordnance Factories was also geared towards export and the use by the FCO of Development Divisions showed that it was not only the Ministry of Defence which was involved in commercial activities overseas. The FCO saw defence exports as a cost effective way of providing support for friendly regimes and such exports were encouraged in areas where Britain had important economic and political interests but where it could not provide direct military support.

Domestic concerns, worries over recession and the prominence of the British defence industry made the search for overseas export markets even more crucial and the GCC States were seen as providing opportunities for both civilian products and defence equipment. Consequently, the chapter has shown that GCC markets played a central role in the British economy as defence and other companies attempted to compete for lucrative contracts.

Another important constructivist claim is that ideational and material structures constitute one another and the question here is whether the discourse revealed any such mutual constitution. The answer lies in understanding the nature of the Thatcher phenomenon which, since it was based upon material notions of interests and economics, clearly demonstrates mutually constitutive structures in that Thatcherite ideas helped maintain certain identities accorded to the GCC States. These in turn reinforced the importance of economic interests thereby contributing to a cyclical process of mutual constitution. This also highlights the highly social nature of the foreign policy making process as argued by constructivists. Interests for states are not exogenous as highlighted by positivist theories such as neo-realism, rather, due to the social context within which states relate to one another, these interests are shaped and formed by the identities accorded to the self and other.

Here domestic concerns over recession and the prominence of the British defence industry, amongst other factors, helped accord certain identities to states such as those in the GCC, thereby contributing to certain interests in these states, which in

turn provided a context for foreign policy. In this highly social environment therefore, interests cannot be pre-established irrespective of space and time but are rather shaped within the social context and are therefore endogenous to the relationship between Britain and the GCC States.

Further analysis of the discourse during this period serves to strengthen the connection between the identity of the Gulf States as important markets and British material interests. At the start of the 1980s the Gulf region had become an epicentre for regional conflict, with resurgent Islam, hostility between Iran and Iraq, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan providing both serious sources of instability and reasons why the Gulf monarchies gave increasing priority to their defence capabilities. Not only did Britain stand to gain commercially from the resulting exports, but also, as the chapter has attempted to demonstrate, the Thatcher government viewed the preservation of stability in the region as an important goal.

The analysis of Britain's export attempts in Oman, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, a sample of countries deemed to be an adequate representation of the situation across the GCC States, showed that Oman was spending heavily on defence equipment at a time when Britain was still its main arms supplier, and similarly Kuwait's fears over the possibility of the Iran-Iraq war spreading prompted it to seek Western help to bolster its defences. The initial US refusal to supply arms had persuaded Kuwait to diversify its sources, and as a result Britain was able to increase its own commercial interests in the Emirate. In addition to this, high levels of Kuwaiti investment in the UK market also contributed to ensuring that Britain's interests in the country remained of primary importance.

Securing defence related and other contracts in the Persian Gulf was subject to intense levels of competition amongst Western suppliers, and Britain's commercial and political interests in the region were confirmed, in particular, by Mrs. Thatcher's own personal sales campaign as demonstrated by her numerous visits to the region. As the first British Prime Minister to visit the Gulf States (while in office), Mrs. Thatcher's trips not only secured numerous sizeable contracts, but also were deemed to be of political significance, especially in light of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

The intense nature of the intra-Western competition was highlighted in particular by the competition over the Saudi market, as Britain sought to capitalise on Saudi Arabia's multiple sources policy. In fact Britain was able to secure significant

defence contracts in light of the US Congress' opposition to sales of sophisticated equipment to Arab States. Furthermore, Saudi anxiety over Washington's support for Israel, Reagan's failure to make a stand over West Bank settlements, and the subsequent loosening of US-Saudi ties enabled other arms suppliers to increase their share of the enormous Saudi market.

Although Britain supported the US viewpoint that the Soviet Union posed a major threat to the region it was prepared to adopt a more pragmatic approach to the region's problems. The Gulf Arab States, including Saudi Arabia, although concerned about Soviet action in the region, continued to regard the Arab-Israeli dispute as constituting the main threat to stability. Mrs. Thatcher's acknowledgement that including the PLO in any negotiations would be inevitable, as opposed to the US refusal to have any dealings whatsoever with them, led the Arab States to believe that they could expect a more favourable attitude from Britain. Indeed, a more even-handed approach combined with commercial persistence brought considerable rewards for Britain such as the *Al Yamamah* contract with Saudi Arabia, which appeared not only significant in size, but was also accorded considerable strategic importance.

Given that the discourse reveals the role that economics was given in structuring foreign policy, the question arises whether the British government believed that its interests in the GCC States were threatened in any way. It was felt that the answer to this lay in identifying some of the threats confronting those states followed by an analysis of their prevalence in the discourse and the subsequent Government response. Chapter 1 argued that the revolutionary changes in Iran in 1979, conflict within the region itself and the perceived Soviet encroachment on the area were seen as posing a threat to the stability of the Gulf region and this chapter has attempted to analyse these issues from the perspective of the British government.

Numerous factors prevalent in the discourse, including Lord Douglas Hurd's comments during a personal interview, show that Britain saw the revolution in Iran as detrimental both to its interests in the GCC States and to the general stability of the region. Its effects were wide-ranging; the resulting oil price increases damaged Sterling's position as a petro-currency, and the US hostage crisis strained Anglo-American relations as Britain refused to freeze Iranian assets (as demanded by the US) for fear of damaging international confidence in London as a financial centre. Iran's decision to terminate various contracts with the Royal Ordnance Factories

caused the loss of considerable business and the Iranian detention of British citizens and its human rights abuses meant that the restoration of normal diplomatic relations was not a possibility. In addition, the chapter has presented evidence to support the claim that Ministers such as Hurd were concerned over the possibility of links being forged between the Iranian revolutionaries and the Soviet Union, thereby heightening the Soviet threat to the region. Indeed, the fundamentalist nature of the regime, which was intent on exporting its vision of Islam to the Gulf States, was of considerable concern to the British Government.

The effects of the Iran-Iraq war were also considerable and of concern to the Government. The danger of it spreading to the GCC States was on occasions a very real possibility as Iranian attacks included targets off the coasts of Kuwait and the UAE. Such action had the effect of persuading the British Government to extend the Armilla Patrol's mode of operation and to include the protection of British merchant shipping within its remit. The threats posed by Iran's fundamentalist regime were considered to be even more serious in the face of the war since there was evidence to suggest that Khomeini's desire to establish an Islamic community was based upon an expansionist policy and that its aim was to transcend state boundaries.

Finally, the analysis of British threat perceptions referred to the belief that the Soviet Union posed a threat to the stability of the region and the Government's interpretation of the aggressive motives behind Soviet Marxist-Leninist philosophy as evidence of the Soviet Union's intention to extend communism by military means if necessary. Its invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 represented the first example of military intervention in a country outside the European context, and Mrs. Thatcher herself held the view that the Soviet Union had used détente to exploit the West's perceived weakness and that Afghanistan was therefore the culmination of a series of proxy interventions in a number of Third World countries. The FCO reached a similar conclusion, stressing that the invasion had the potential of undermining stability in the surrounding region, and indeed the Government as a whole regarded the invasion as having significantly altered the balance of forces in the region to the detriment of Britain and the West.

The chapter has also identified a number of additional factors prevalent in the discourse which, although not necessarily explanatory tools of great import, nevertheless do provide some suggestions as to governmental interests and response. For example, despite the increasing constraints on the defence budget, the chapter has

shown that the Government sought to maintain a military presence in the region during the period 1979-1988. The first ships of the Armilla Patrol were in place by 1980 and, despite their limited mandate, they remained in operation during the entire period and therefore demonstrated that the British government was concerned over the stability of the region. This continuing military presence gains added significance given the acknowledgement by the 1981 Defence Review of Britain's reduced economic capabilities.

This difficulty in matching resources to commitments led to Mrs. Thatcher's initial claims that Britain would contribute substantially to the US RDF being moderated, since providing large numbers of forces would not have been financially viable. However, despite this, there was the decision to expand facilities at Diego Garcia, and in Mrs. Thatcher's subsequent trip to the US in 1981 she openly voiced her concern over Soviet encroachment on the region and reiterated British support for the RDF. Evidence of a smaller British equivalent of the RDF, a brigade based in Saudi Arabia to which Oman was contributing, has also come to light.

The chapter has also analysed other elements of Britain's military presence in the region which included the deployment of Naval task Groups, the carrying out of military exercises in the region; military assistance to the GCC States, and the provision, within the British armed forces, of elements specifically designed for such operations. Military exercises such as *Saif Sareea* in 1986, the loan of service personnel to undertake military training programmes in various GCC States, including the extensive involvement in Oman, and the procurement of Hercules transport aircraft fitted with station-keeping radar amongst other modest provisions can all be seen as cost effective methods of retaining a military presence in the region. At a time when the Government insisted that it was no longer possible to construct a separate force able to deal with all contingencies, in light of the factors highlighted in the discourse the provisions outlined in this chapter are suggestive of the British government's concerns regarding the Persian Gulf.

As has been seen, by the end of this period various developments had led to the need for a considerable reassessment of Britain's threat perceptions. The improvement in Anglo-Soviet (and general East-West) relations, the end of the Iran-Iraq war with Iran's acceptance of Resolution 598 in 1988 and the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, also in 1988, all contributed to a collective feeling of confidence in existing policy.[226] This encouraged the British Government to believe that it could

continue to support and facilitate trade links in light of the atmosphere of improved stability in the Gulf.

There are two final questions that need to be discussed here. The first is, having analysed Thatcherite discourse during the period 1979-1988, can any conclusions about British foreign policy be drawn at this stage and secondly, how useful has constructivism been as an approach in identifying key issues for analysis? It would be useful to develop some preliminary thoughts on this given that the period examined here represented the longest section of time covered by this thesis.

The constructivist approach claims the existence of an ideational component that can cause behaviour of a type that cannot be explained by rationalist accounts. In this context a constructivist perspective goes beyond merely allowing the formulation of causal explanations to the devising of constitutive arguments which are able to discuss much more than the relationship between dependent and independent variables. In light of the material presented in this chapter, therefore, is it possible to identify key factors from which some discussion of conclusions is possible?

Discourse analysis has shown that during the period 1979-1988 economic factors featured prominently and from a constructivist angle this would suggest that Thatcherism played an ideational role, whereby this belief system structured a framework for foreign policy towards the GCC States. The evidence presented in this chapter in support of the hypothesis has been based on the Thatcherite discourse available and having analysed the material it is possible to argue that there were powerful connections between key variables based on economic interests and foreign policy.

Furthermore, a constitutive framework would entail some understanding of how the identities of the GCC States as markets for British defence and other exports were formed. Here evidence presented in section 1 of this chapter can be drawn upon whereby Britain's continuing reliance on Middle Eastern, especially GCC, crude oil led to the construction by the government of the view that the Persian Gulf region was of considerable geo-strategic importance. Furthermore, an attempt has been made to show that recessionary trends in British manufacturing industry provided the Thatcher government with opportunities to show that it was serious about what it perceived as Britain's economic decline. In this context key elements within the discourse suggested that the government believed that the defence industry had proved to be more resilient than other manufacturing sectors and that, therefore, it was prudent to

adopt an aggressive stance towards the sale of defence equipment to overseas customers. Domestic employment concerns, worries over the recession, Britain's overall economic decline and the prominence of British defence industries may have further contributed to the government's construction of the GCC States as markets for British exports.

Constitutive questions can also be asked with regard to Britain's military presence in the Persian Gulf region during the period 1979-1988. Earlier it was asked whether the British government believed that its interests in the GCC States were threatened in any way. Revolutionary changes in Iran, conflict within the region and perceptions, held by the government, that the Soviet Union posed a possible threat to the region, provide a basis for the claim that there was a mutual constitution between threats and interests whereby the possibility of disruption to oil and trade routes through the Straits of Hormuz may have been presented as a rationale behind a British military presence.

Finally, in light of the discussion above, is it possible, at this stage, to endorse the statement of hypothesis that Thatcherism did indeed create a framework for approaching foreign policy and that the nature of British foreign policy during this period was constructed by the positivist discourse of economic interests? Though this appears to be a powerful argument in the context of the material presented in this chapter, there remains the assertion that constructivism straddles positivist and post-positivist epistemologies, and this means that any empirical analysis of a case study such as this can be subject to reflection and interpretation where it is not possible to separate the observer from the observed. In this context, therefore, the opinions of the observer take on added significance. Despite the acceptance that Thatcherism represented a belief system based on economic and interests, it could be argued that it remains far from certain that economic factors shaped British foreign policy exclusively.

Indeed evidence has appeared within the discourse of possible alternative explanations for British policy, such as the comments made by Sir Franck Cooper, who in stating that commercial interests were not a 'mainspring of British policy but rather an element of it' and that historical connections were at least as important as economic interests, has raised the issue of alternative explanations.[227] Furthermore Lord Douglas Hurd in stating ' ... I think it is true that we were more active - and of course there is a commercial angle to that ... but there was also a feeling on our part

that this was a very important part of the world where there were a lot of British people involved' highlighted the general geo-strategic value of the region.[228]

In addition, maintaining good diplomatic and defence relations with various GCC States highlighted historical connections. Apart from the commercial relations with Oman, for instance, Britain maintained very close defence contact through the integration of British loan service personnel and military advisors into the Omani armed forces. This was seen by the British government as an important cost effective method of maintaining defence links with the Emirate and in addition to these defence links Britain had longstanding treaties of friendship and co-operation with other GCC States (see Appendix 1) which once again highlighted Britain's close diplomatic and historical links with these particular States.

Though Thatcherite discourse has seemed to be largely concerned with economic factors, such evidence, apart from highlighting the emphasis of the constructivist approach on inter-subjective discursive analysis does suggest that it may be possible to identify alternative explanations. More will be said on this issue in the final conclusion.

## Notes

1 Turner, L., 'Economic developments in the oil producing Middle East', *Memorandum to the Foreign Affairs Committee, (68/79-80/FM).*

2 Lord Carrington's statement was made in response to being questioned about a Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) memorandum sent to the Foreign Affairs Committee in which the FCO highlighted the fact that Britain maintained a small military capability outside Europe. Clearly by using the Gulf as an example Lord Carrington was not foregoing the possibility of using this 'small military capability' for the purposes of defending British oil (and other) interests in the region. See 'Objectives of British Foreign Policy', *Memorandum from the FCO to the Foreign Affairs Committee, (14/79-80/FM).*

3 Robinson, Colin, 'North Sea oil depletion policy', *Memorandum to the Energy Committee, (M363)*, 20 November 1981, p.240.

4 Ibid., p.257.

5 See *Hansard*, vol.45, 'North Sea oil', 11 July 1983, column 225. Forecasts in 1982/83 indicated that oil production from the United Kingdom Continental Shelf was likely to peak soon after 1985 and that according to trends at the time the UK was likely to remain self-sufficient in oil until the early 1990s.

6 While being questioned by the Energy Committee, A.J. Wiggins (Head of Oil Division, Under-Secretary) stated that, despite self-sufficiency, Britain could not rely on that oil production being invulnerable in all circumstances. This clearly highlights both the importance of petroleum stocks and the need for diversification of supply. ***Select Committee on Energy, Session 1980-81***, 'North Sea Oil depletion policy, Department of Energy', together with the *Minutes of Evidence*, Printed 7 May 1981.

7 Morgan, Kevin, 'The politics of industrial innovation in Britain', *Government and Opposition*, vol.18, no.3, 1983, p.305.

8 Hanaghan, Patrick, 'Is the economy in decline', *Crossbow*, vol.22, no.85, Autumn 1980, p.23.

9 Grant, Wyn, 'British industrial policy: the problem and its perception', *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol.35, no.3, Summer 1982, p.282.

10 Ibid., p.283. In his analysis Grant admitted that although all the European countries were suffering from the recession of the early 1980s, Britain was by far the worst affected because of the open nature of its economy. This meant that the quantities imported and exported had a greater effect on Britain's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) than they had on the GDP of its competitors. Import penetration was therefore likely to have a greater adverse impact on its economy than on that of either West Germany or France.

11 Thain, Colin, 'The Treasury and Britain's decline', *Political Studies*, xxxii, 1984, p.581.

12 Statement by Sir Geoffrey Howe (Chancellor of the Exchequer), *Autumn Statement*: HM Treasury, November 1982.

13 *Memorandum submitted by the Machine Tools Economic Development Committee to the Industry and Trade Committee, MT23*, 9 March 1983, p.73.

14 'The British Steel Corporation's prospects', *Trade and Industry Committee, Session 1983-84*, 18 January 1984, p.3.

15 *Trade and Industry Committee, Second Report, Session 1983-84*, p.vii.

16 Thatcher, Margaret, *The Downing Street Years*, London, HarperCollins Publishers, 1995, pp.6-7.

17 'Imports and Exports', *Industry and Trade Committee, First Report, Session 1980-81*, p.xv.

18 Asteris, M., 'British arms procurement: protection versus freer trade', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.129, no.1, March 1984, p.31.

19 Idem.

20 Ibid., p.32.

21 Geoffrey Pattie (Minister of State for Defence Procurement), 'Value for money in defence equipment procurement', *Defence Open Government Document, 83/01: HC (1981/2) 22-1).*

22 Asteris, op.cit., p.30.

23 *Personal interview with Sir Colin Chandler*, Head of Defence Sales, 1985-1989.

24 Jones, Ian, and Rees, G.Wyn, 'Britain and post-Cold War arms transfers', *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol.15, no.1, 1994, p.109.

25 'Restraining arms production to the Third World: will Europe agree?' *Survival*, January/February 1979, p.17. Also see Jones and Rees, ibid., p.111, who state that the economic motivations of defence exports included contribution to balance of payments accounts, increased employment in established industries, securing a high tech skills base due to increasing sophistication, and the reduction in unit costs for equipment bought domestically.

26 Sir Ronald Ellis, Head of DESO (MOD), 'Defence sales', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.124, no.2, June 1979, p.4.

27 Idem.

28 Hartley, Keith and Lynk, Edward, 'The political economy of UK defence expenditure', *The Rusi Journal*, March 1980, pp.32-33.

29 Geoffrey Pattie, *Defence open government document, 83/01: HC (1981/2) 22-1*, op.cit. See also 'Defence cuts and defence estimates', *Defence Committee, Session 1980-81*, 11 and 18 March 1981, *Minutes of Evidence*, pp.33-50. Evidence presented at this session indicated that overspending the defence budget in the previous year had contributed to the subsequent defence cuts. As J.D. Bryars (the then Deputy Under-Secretary - Finance and Budget) stated,

'... there is a general policy that overspending in any one year will be recovered by a reduction from the cash limit in the following year'.

30 Geoffrey Pattie, *Defence open government document*, ibid.

31 'Statement on the Defence Estimates 1980', *Defence Committee, Second Report, Session 1979-80*, 23 April 1980, p.7.

32 Green, G.H., 'British policy for defence procurement', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.121, no.3, September 1976, p.24.

33 Ibid., p.20.

34 Statement by Douglas Hurd (the then Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs), in *Hansard*, vol. 6, 12 June 1981, column 222.

35 Statement by Michael Heseltine (the then Secretary of State for Defence), in *Hansard*, 'Overseas defence contracts', vol.87, 26 November 1985, column 564.

36 Air Chief Marshall Sir Frederick Rosier, 'Defence policy and arms sales', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.121, no.4, December 1976, pp.59-61.

37 Sir Ronald Ellis, op.cit., p.5.

38 *Personal interview with Sir Colin Chandler.*

39 *Public Accounts Committee, 16th Report, Session 1979-80*, 'Matters relating to the Ministry of Defence, 16 June 1980, pp.xvi-xvii.

40 'Defence cuts and defence estimates', *Defence Committee, Minutes of Evidence*, 28 April 1981, p.13.

41 Ibid., pp.xviii-xix.

42 For more information see ibid. p.xx and also see statements by Sir Frank Cooper (the then Permanent Under-Secretary of State, MOD), who reconfirmed the MOD's plans to rationalise arrangements for defence sales whereby the DSO's procurement functions would be transferred to the IMS. This in turn meant that the DSO would then have the purely strategic role of exploring potential markets, whereas the IMS would be responsible for the individual sales contracts and procurement of necessary goods and services. See *the Third Report from the Committee of Public Accounts, Session 1980-81*, 30 April 1981, p.20.

43 'Development Division', *Foreign Affairs Committee, Fourth Report, Session 1979-80*, 16 July 1980, pp.xxi-xxviii. Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain being members of the GCC.

44 'Foreign policy aspects of overseas arms sales', *Memorandum from the FCO to the Foreign Affairs Committee, (72/80-81/FM)*, 24 February 1981, p.37.

45 Idem. In addition Geoffrey Pattie stated in the House of Commons 'Arms sales arouse strong emotions but the political and economic arguments speak for themselves. In political terms, we believe that the supply of defence equipment to friendly nations, often backed by military advice, training and support, underlines our concern for their security, strengthens their ability to resist aggression and helps protect Western interests. We must also accept ... that a refusal to supply arms often opens the door to another supplier who is hostile to Western interests and hence undermines our influence', in *Hansard*, vol.46, 'Defence estimates', 20 July 1983, column 399.

46 'Restraining arms exports to the Third World: will Europe agree?' Survival, op.cit.

47 See Ibid., pp.15-16. As the article states, over 70 percent of all production at the time of the creation of BAe (1977) was for export and Dassault Breguet exported more than 60 percent of its production.

48 Ibid., p.17.

49 Views of John Nott, *Industry and Trade Committee, Session 1979-80, Minutes of Evidence, 16 January 1980, pp.6-7.*

50 Statement by Douglas Hurd in *Hansard*, 'GCC', vol.10, 28 October 1981, column 388. The Gulf Co-operation Council, formed in 1981, comprised six states, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Oman and Saudi Arabia.

51 Statement by Richard Luce (the then Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office) in *Hansard*, 'Gulf Co-operation Council', 21 February 1984, vol.54, column 475.

52 Statement by Richard Luce, in *Hansard*, 'Persian Gulf (British Interests)', vol.64, 25 July 1984, column 698.

53 'Special Report: Oman', *Middle East Economic Digest*, September 1978, p.50.

54 Idem.

55 'Oman: high spending to continue', *Middle East Economic Digest*, 23 March 1979.

56 Whelan, John, 'Industrial plans offer scope for the West', *The Financial Times*, 28 January 1980.

57 'Oman: a profile', *Strategy and Defence*, May 1984.

58 For more information and details of various other contracts see 'Oman', *Middle East Economic Digest*, 5 August 1983; 'Further Omani orders for Vosper Thornycroft', *Maritime Defence*, February 1981; 'New warships for Oman Navy', *Summary of World Broadcasts*, 12 May 1984; 'New Omani coastal vessel launched', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 26 May 1984; and 'Two new additions to Omani Navy', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 21 April 1984; 'Oman gets Scorpion', *Strategy Weekly*, 21-26 April 1980. These articles indicate the importance of the Omani market for British naval exports.

59 Oman's airforce was equipped with Hunter and Jaguar aircraft as well as some helicopters and transport aircraft. The Tornado deal with Oman was worth over £250 million. This represented the Tornado's first export success soon to be followed by an even bigger order from Saudi Arabia. See Walker, Andrew, 'Oman in search of military autonomy', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 14 December 1985. Also see 'Tornadoes in the Gulf', *Foreign Report*, 17 November 1983, and 'Middle East: Oman buys the Tornado', *Defence and Foreign Affairs Weekly*, 26 August 1985. For information on competition between the British Tornado and the US F-16 see Neff, Donald, 'Oman in market for small fleet of US F-16 fighter jets', The Washington Times, 9 May 1985.

60 Statement by Sir Geoffrey Howe (the then Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) in *Hansard*, 'Oman', 22 February 1984, columns 807-808.

61 For more information on this see statements by various MPs in *Hansard*, vol.56, 'Middle East (Prime Minister's Visit), 12 March 1984, columns 221-238.

62 Statement by Richard Luce in *Hansard*, Ibid., column 237.

63 Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, op.cit., pp.163-164. On a visit to Oman Thatcher was to offer the Ground attack Hawk and Trainer.

64 Davenport, Peter, 'Falklands lessons put to the test in Oman', *The Times*, 12 November 1986. Also see Davenport, Peter, 'Tornados display rapid deployment', *The Times*, 26 November 1986, and 'UK/Oman Exercise', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 15 February 1986. The Saif Sareera (Swift Sword) exercise conducted with Oman in November 1986 involved naval ships, including the Carrier Illustrious, elements of 40 Commando Royal Marines, the Fifth Airborne Brigade, and one Battalion of the Parachute Regiment.

65 Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, op.cit., pp.164.

66 'Defence spending increases', *Middle East Economic Digest*, 6 March 1981. Also see Roy, Amit, 'Thatcher's window on Kuwait', *The Daily Telegraph*, 28 September 1981. Mrs. Thatcher is quoted here as saying 'There's a tremendous lot for Britain here'.

67 Donne, Michael, 'Kuwait buys 12 Hawk jets', *The Financial Times*, 1 November 1983. Kuwait was also to place orders for up to 12 naval support vessels with British shipbuilders, Cheverton Warboats of Cowes. See 'Kuwait: naval support vessels', *Defence and Foreign Affairs Daily*, 29 April 1983.

[68] See Arkinson, Rick, 'Kuwait asks to buy US Stinger missiles', *The International Herald Tribune*, 1 June 1984. Also see Brummer, Alex, 'Kuwait gets icy response to Stinger request', *The Guardian*, 2 June 1984, and Taylor, Frank, 'US bars Kuwait Stingers', *The Daily Telegraph*, 2 June 1984. Also see 'Arms', *The Arab Times*, 25 September 1984.

[69] Darwish, Adel, 'Younger seeks Kuwaiti arms deal', *The Independent*, 12 July 1988. Also see 'Younger presses Kuwaitis to buy British', *The Guardian*, 13 July 1988.

[70] For further information on the arms deal with the US see, Brummer, Alex, 'US ready to sign fighter deal with Kuwait', *The Guardian*, 1 August 1988 and Darwish, Adel, 'Kuwait decides against Tornado', *The Independent*, 15 August 1988.

[71] Kuwait had the third largest refining capacity in OPEC, after Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, its refineries being able to handle up to 650,000 bd.

[72] Ibrahim, Youssef M., 'Kuwait races to beat the day oil runs out', *The International Herald Tribune*, 4 October 1979.

[73] For both quotes see Maughan, Ray, 'Huge but silent investment in UK market', *The Financial Times*, 24 February 1982, and Maughan, Ray, 'Huge stake in British industry and commerce', *The Financial Times*, 23 February 1983.

[74] Cooley, John K., 'Western countries tied to Kuwait by more than oil', *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 July 1987.

[75] Johns, Richard, 'Saudis to hold back demand for improved F-15s', *The Financial Times*, 1 September 1980. For more information on the request and proposed sale see Dybvick, Russell E., *The Reagan Administration's decision to sell air defence equipment to Saudi Arabia*, Embassy of the US, International Communication Agency, 25 August 1981. President Reagan was to advise Congress of his decision to sell some $8,500 million worth of air defence equipment to Saudi Arabia including 5 AWACs, 6 K-707 Aerial refuelling Aircraft, 1,177 AIM 9L Sidewinder Missiles, and 101 sets of conformal fuel tanks to extend the F-15s range.

[76] For an analysis of the rift between the US and Saudi Arabia over the question of the Camp David peace accord see Lewis, Anthony, 'The riddle of the Saudis', *The International herald Tribune*, 26 June 1979, and Haagland, Jim, 'US offers reassurance to ease Saudi fears of a rift', *The International Herald Tribune*, 29 April 1979.

[77] Dales, Reginald and Johns, Richard, 'Saudis decline US offer of military aid in Gulf', *The Financial Times*, 23 May 1984.

[78] Stanhope, Henry, 'Saudi unease at policy of US adds weight to Prince's British visit', *The Times*, 22 February 1984.

[79] There were even reports that the Saudis were threatening to purchase arms from the Soviet Union. The purpose of this would have been to put pressure on the US to upgrade F-15 equipment. Though Buchan claimed that such Saudi statements were largely rhetorical since the fiercely anti-communist Kingdom had had no diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union since 1938. See Buchan, James, 'Saudi Arabia threatens to buy Soviet arms', *The Financial Times*, 24 February 1981.

[80] Donne, Michael, 'Saudis show interest in big Tornado fighter purchase', *The Financial Times*, 11 February 1981.

[81] See also 'Saudis want 100 Tornados', *Flight International*, 21 February 1981.

[82] Seale, Patrick, 'Saudis may buy Nimrod', *The Observer*, 27 September 1981. Also see 'The AWACs deal', *The Daily Telegraph*, 20 October 1980. This article further confirmed that the Saudis were considering applying for the British Nimrod if the AWACs deal fell through. Also Cooper, G.S., 'Nimrods can fill role for AWACs in Saudi', *The Daily Telegraph*, 17 October 1981.

[83] The US forbade in particular the stationing of American-made fighters at the Kingdom's forward base facing Israel at Tabuk. See Buchan, James, 'BAe set for £500m Saudi deal', *The Financial Times*, 4 June 1981.

[84] 'Saudis want 100 Tornados', *Flight International*, 21 February 1981, op.cit.

85 Statements by Mr. Channon in *Hansard*, 'Middle East (ministerial visit)', vol.68, 21 November 1984, column 292, and *Hansard*, vol.87, 27 November 1985, column 865.

86 Statement by Richard Luce in *Hansard*, 'Middle East (arms supplies)', vol.73, 20 February 1985.

87 'Saudi Arabia: BAe contract extended', *Defence and Foreign Affairs Daily*, 27 August 1982. The total value of the programme was estimated at £1.3 bn.

88 Keatley, Patrick, 'Britain is heartened by Khaled visit', *The Guardian*, 9 June 1981.

89 Harris, Derek, 'Mutual awareness between two peoples grows as commercial links are forged', *The Times*, 9 June 1981.

90 Clough, Patricia, 'Formula sought to pacify Saudis', *The Times*, 4 January 1983. The US held to its position that the Soviet Union constituted the main threat to the Middle East.

91 See *Hansard*, vol.1, 'Middle East (EEC initiative)', 18 March 1981, column 273; and for Hurd's statement see *Hansard*, vol.9, 'Middle East', 22 July 1981.

92 Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, op.cit., p.487.

93 Statement by Ian Gilmour in *Hansard*, vol.1, 'Middle East (EEC initiative)', op.cit.

94 All statements by Ian Gilmour in *Hansard*, vol.7, 'Arab-Israeli dispute', 24 June 1981, columns 235-236.

95 Statement by Ian Gilmour in *Hansard*, vol.1, op.cit., column 273.

96 See statements by Douglas Hurd in *Hansard*, vol.13, 'Middle East (terrorist attacks)', 18 November 1981, column 266, and *Hansard*, vol.19, 'Israel', 3 March 1982, column 256. In *Hansard*, vol.19, 'Judaea and Samaria', 8 March 1982, Hurd stated, 'In the Government's view, Israeli settlements in the territories which historically formed part of Judaea and Samaria are illegal by virtue of the fact that their establishment is inconsistent with Israel's status as an occupying power and is contrary to certain provisions of the 4th Geneva Convention, to which Israel is a party. The Government recognised Jordanian Sovereignty over these territories in 1950. Jordan has made clear that she maintains her claim to sovereignty over the West Bank until such time as the Palestinians are able to decide its future themselves.

97 Statement by Francis Pym in *Hansard*, vol.26, 'the Middle East', 22 June 1982, column 210. Following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the UK and the other members of the European Community were to go so far as to restrict further arms sales to Israel. As Geoffrey Pattie (the then Minister of State for Defence Procurement) was to state: ' Since 30 June 1982 the UK and other members of the European Community have suspended licences for the sale of defence equipment to Israel. These restrictions, imposed following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, remain in force ...', see *Hansard*, vol.62, 'Israel (arms sales)', 27 June 1984, columns 449-450.

98 See McLain, Lynton, 'BAe seeks Saudi renewal of defence support contract', *The Financial Times*, 11 April 1985. The French were pushing the case for the Mirage 2000, even though it did not have the Tornado's ground attack capabilities. There is no doubt that French competition was a worry for the British, particularly since France had recently been so successful in Saudi Arabia that it was challenging the US as the main supplier.

99 See Seale, Patrick, 'Saudis halt £1 bn UK deal', *The Observer*, 25 November 1984; Bloom, Bridget, 'UK may lose £1 bn Saudi aircraft order', *The Financial Times*, 26 November 1984; DeYoung, Karen, 'Saudis decide to buy fighter jets from Britain', *The International Herald Tribune*, 16 September 1985; Ashford, Nicholas, 'UK signs £3000 m Saudi deal', *The Times*, 26 September 1985.

100 *Personal interview with Sir Colin Chandler.* See 'Saudis, British define terms of Tornado sale', *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 30 September 1985, for details of the equipment supplied. See also statement by Norman Lamont (the then Secretary of State for Defence), in *Hansard*, vol.84, 'Saudi Arabia (warplanes)', 21-30 October 1985, columns 359-360. The *Al Yamamah* deal consisted of the sale of 48 Panavia Tornado interdiction/strike aircraft, to be

equipped with all the subsystems, including countermeasures equipment, normally used by the RAF; 24 Tornado F-3 air defence aircraft largely to fill the gap in the Saudi air defence system left by the US refusal to sell additional F-15s; 30 BAe Hawk Trainer aircraft to replace the exiting BAC 167 Strikemasters; an additional 30 trainer aircraft (the Pilatus PC-9 turboprops), which were to be purchased by Britain from Switzerland as completed airframes and outfitted to Saudi requirements by BAe; Airborne weaponry normally carried by these aircraft including BAe Skyflash air-to-air missiles in the case of the Tornado F-3, the BAe Dynamics Alarm antiradiation and Sea Eagle antiship missiles and the Hunting JP2 33 airfield attack system with operational training on all systems and long-term operational support.

101 Fairhall, David, 'Saudi tank deal sought', *The Guardian*, 26 June 1985; 'Saudi Arabia to trial Challenger', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 16 March 1985.

102 Townsend, Edward, 'Saudis sign £5,000 m deal', *The Times*, 18 February 1986. Also see, Bloom, Bridget and Lawson, Dominic, 'UK signs £5 bn defence deal with Saudi Arabia', *The Financial Times*, 18 February 1986 and Bloom, Bridget, and Johns, Richard, 'A deal in a different dimension', *The Financial Times*, 19 February 1986.

103 Bailey, Robert, 'Saudi Tornado award breaks UK export records', *The Middle East Economic Digest*, 22 February 1986.

104 'Significant enhancement to Project *Al Yamamah*', *Ministry of Defence News Release*, 8 July 1988.

105 The second major phase of the Al Yamamah contract consisted of an additional 40 to 50 Tornados in defence and ground attack versions; 60 more Hawk advanced trainers (including the new Hawk 200 single-seater version); the construction of either 1 or 2 air bases through the Dutch company Ballast Nedam which BAe had bought in 1987; a small number of BAe 125 and BAe 146 jet aircraft for communications; significant training programmes and invitations to Westland and Vosper Thornycroft to supply 80 helicopters and 6 Sandown Class Minehunters respectively.

106 'Saudis seek to offset British Tornado deal', *The Times*, 7 May 1986; 'Trouble over Tornados' *Foreign Report*, 8 May 1986; Bailey, Robert, 'Tornado deal flies into turbulence', *The Middle East Economic Digest*, 21 June 1986.

107 The Vickers tender immediately followed a visit by George Younger (the then Defence Secretary) to discuss the progress of *Al Yamamah*. See 'Younger visits Saudi Arabia', *Middle East Mirror*, 9 February 1987. For additional information on the offsets issue see John, Richard, 'UK- Saudi submarine order hangs on offset', *The Financial Times*, 11 March 1987 and Getler, Warren, 'Saudis seeking first submarines are likely to buy British or French', *The International Herald Tribune*, 1 June 1987. In this article Getler stated that 'one factor ... [weakening] Britain's position in the bidding [was] the Saudi disappointment at the pace of British investments in Saudi Arabia. "Offset" investment was a condition of the Saudis contract to buy ... Tornado fighters.

*In their search for a suitable supplier of submarines for the Saudi Navy programme Saudi Arabia asked the following companies to submit bids:*

DCN of France
CNI/Fincantieri (Italy)
HDW (Germany) – The Type 2000
Kockums (Sweden) – the Type 471
RDM (the Netherlands) – the Walrus Class
Thyssen Nordseewerke (Germany)
Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering (UK) – the Type 2400 Diesel Electric

108 Statement by David Mellor (the then Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office), in 'The Iran/Iraq conflict', *Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report, Session 1987-88, Minutes of Evidence*, 20 April 1988, p.134.

109 See 'UK Al Yamamah Economic Offset Programme', *Ministry of Defence News Release*, 23 November 1988 and Graham, Douglas, 'Saudis ask UK to invest £1 bn', *The Times*, 25 November 1988.

110 Tyler, Christian, 'Row with Saudis threatens orders', *The Financial Times*, 10 January 1983; and Chapman, Rod, 'Opportunities still beckon UK salesmen', *The Guardian*, 20 December 1982.

111 See McDermott, Anthony, 'Documentary drama strains British links with Saudis', *The Financial Times*, 11 April 1980; Hooper, John, 'Saudis demand withdrawal of ambassador', *The Guardian*, 24 April 1980; Mortimer, Edward, 'Saudis honouring British contracts although unhopeful of new deals, *The Times*, 2 May 1980; Hooper, John and Knewstub, Nikki, 'Whitehall still fears Saudi backlash', *The Guardian*, 11 April 1980; and Johns, Richard, 'Pym visit to Saudi Arabia cancelled', *The Financial Times*, 25 April 1980.

112 Adamson, David, 'Penance to Saudis by Carrington', *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 May 1980.

113 Buchan, James, 'Saudi arms buyers to visit West Germany', *The Financial Times*, 12 October 1984.

114 See Bulloch, John, 'Saudis look to Europe for advanced weapons', *The Daily Telegraph*, 1 February 1982; 'France and Saudis sign huge arms contract', *The Financial Times*, 17 January 1984; Bailey, Robert, 'Why Saudi Arabia chose Shahine', *Middle East Economic Digest*, 17 February 1984 and Donnely, Barbara, 'Matra: Shahine order keeps Middle East on top', *Middle East Economic Digest*, 17 February 1984.

115 Fay, Stephen, 'Mrs. Thatcher treads warily in the Gulf', *The Times*, 20 April 1981.

116 Idem.

117 *Personal interview with Stephen Day*, Ambassador to Qatar between 1981 and 1984 and Head of the Middle East Department between 1984 and 1986.

118 *Personal interview with Sir Frank Cooper*, Permanent Under-Secretary of State (MOD) 1976-1982.

119 Cooper, idem.

120 Cooper, idem.

121 *Personal interview with Lord Douglas Hurd*, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 1979-1983. Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs during the Gulf crisis following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

122 See for instance, Rouleau, Eric, 'Khomeini's Iran', *Foreign Affairs*, vol.59, no.1, Fall 1980.

123 Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, op.cit., p.42.

124 Thatcher, ibid., p.88.

125 'Matters relating to the Ministry of Defence', *Public Accounts Committee, 16th Report, Session 1979-80*, 16 June 1980.

126 Statement by John Graham (the then Ambassador to Iran), in 'Consequences of Soviet expansion for British foreign policy', *Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 1979-80*, 26 March 1980, p.78.

127 See *Hansard, 5th Series*, vol.968, 11 June to 22 June 1980.

128 Idem.

129 For more information on the US relations with various Gulf states see Murphy, Richard W., 'US interests in the Gulf', in *Global interests in the Arab Gulf*, (ed., Charles E. Davies), University of Exeter Press, 1992, pp.339-342.

130 Statement by Sir Ian Gilmour in *Hansard, 5th Series*, vol.999, column 125.

131 Statement by Douglas Hurd in *Hansard, 5th Series*, vol.996, column 1118.

132 Statement by Malcolm Rifkind (the then Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs), in *Hansard*, vol.39, 'Summary and arbitrary executions', 24 March 1983, columns 1170-1178. For further official comment on British attitudes towards Iran's persecution of Baha'is see *Hansard*, vol.44, 'Iran', 29 June 1983, column 100; *Hansard*, vol.58, 'Iran', 10 April 1984, column 191; *Hansard*, vol.59, 'Iran (Baha'i perecution)', 2 May 1984, column 236 and 'Iran', 11 May 1984, column 494; *Hansard*, vol.64, 'Iran (Baha'i persecution)', 24 July 1984, column 590; *Hansard*, vol.70, 'Baha'i community (Iran)', 21 December 1984, columns 747-752.

133 *Personal interview with Sir Frank Cooper.*

134 Statement by Douglas Hurd, in *Hansard, 5th Series*, vol.996, column 1124.

135 Statement by Douglas Hurd, in *Hansard*, vol.25, 'Iran', 9 June 1982, column 190.

136 *Personal interview with Lord Douglas Hurd.*

137 Carrington, Peter, *Reflect on things past: the memoirs of Lord Carrington*, London, Collins, 1988, p.340. Concern over the spread of Islamic fundamentalism was also apparent in many of the GCC States such as Saudi Arabia. For more information on this see for example, Obendorfer, Dan, 'Saudis on Guard to prevent Iranian-style revolt', *The Washington Post*, 8 May 1979. For information concerns in Kuwait see Markham, James, M., 'Kuwait seen as microcosm of tensions in Middle East', *The International Herald Tribune*, 30 June – 1 July 1979; 'Kuwait: a war zone: 1,300 miles of Gulf coastline', *The International Herald Tribune*, November 1979; Boroweic, Andrew, 'Small, defenceless country sitting on billions of barrels of oil', *The International Herald Tribune*, November 1979; 'Kuwait: deadline approaching', *Middle East Intelligence Survey*, 1-15 May 1980, pp.21-22, and Paxman, Jeremy, 'Caught in a storm', *The Listener*, 12 July 1984.

138 Pym, Francis, *The Politics of Consent*, London, Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1984, p.29. Francis Pym was appointed Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs following Lord Carrington's resignation in April 1982.

139 Hiro, Dilip, *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1985, p.281.

140 Ibid., p.283. Moscow's hopes were realised when on 13 March 1979 Iran quit the US sponsored defence organisation Cento and later applied to join the Non-aligned Movement.

141 Statement by Douglas Hurd in 'Consequences of Soviet expansion for British foreign policy', *Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 1979-80, Minutes of Evidence*, 26 March 1980, p.52.

142 Hiro cites Khomeini in *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, op.cit., p.284.

143 Statement by Douglas Hurd in 'Consequences of Soviet expansion for British foreign policy', *Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 1979-80, Minutes of Evidence*, 26 March 1980, p.52.

144 Statement by Sir Geoffrey Howe in *Hansard*, vol.120, 'The Gulf', 21 October 1987, column 723.

145 Statement by Francis Pym (the then Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) in *Hansard*, vol.31, 4 November 1982, column 126.

146 'The Iran-Iraq conflict', *Memorandum from the FCO to the Foreign Affairs Committee (GF/2)*, 27 January 1988.

147 Statement by Sir Geoffrey Howe in *Hansard*, vol.120, 'Iran-Iraq Conflict', 21 July 1987, column 205. See also statements by David Mellor in *Hansard*, vol.122, 'Gulf War', 18 November 1987, column 599, and 'The Gulf', 9 December 1987, columns 181-182.

148 'Current UK policy towards the Iran/Iraq conflict', *Second Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 1987-88*, 27 June 1988, p.xi.

149 'The Iran/Iraq conflict', *Memorandum from the FCO to the Foreign Affairs Committee (GF/2)*, op.cit.

150 See statement by Tim Renton (the then Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) in *Hansard*, vol.97, 'Iran-Iraq war', 7 May 1986, columns 142-143.

151 Statement by Sir Geoffrey Howe in *Hansard*, vol.120, 'Iran-Iraq conflict', 21 July 1987, column 205.

152 Statement by Francis Pym in *Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 1982-83, Minutes of Evidence*, 20 December 1982, pp.9-10.

153 Statement by Sir Geoffrey Howe in *Hansard*, vol.120, op.cit., column 205. Also see the following for other general statements on the Iran/Iraq war. *Hansard*, vol.124, 'The Gulf', 9 December 1987, columns 181-182; 'Iran-Iraq war', 16 December 1987, column 564; 'Gulf war', 16 December 1987, columns 559-560; *Hansard*, vol.126, 'Iran-Iraq war', 28 January 1988, column 316; and *Hansard*, vol.118, 'Debate on the Address (Foreign Affairs)', 26 June 1987, column 162.

154 Both are statements by David Mellor (the then Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs), 'Current UK policy towards the Iran/Iraq conflict', *Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report, Session 1987-88, Minutes of Evidence*, 10 February 1988, p.17 and pp.11-12 respectively.

155 *'The consequence of Soviet expansion for British foreign policy'*, Memorandum by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 23/79-80/FM, *p.1. The prevailing belief in the Foreign Office was that the Soviet Union had seen détente as a means of obtaining strategic parity with the West while avoiding nuclear war. The Soviets had also made clear that they did not regard détente as inhibiting them from continuing their military build-up and extending their influence in both Eastern Europe and lately the Third World.*

156 Statement by Peter Blaker (the then Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) in *Foreign Affairs Committee, Fifth Report, Session 1979-80, Minutes of Evidence*, 20 February 1980, p.132.

157 'Defence in the 1980s, Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1980', *Cmnd 7826-I*, p.5.

158 Idem.

159 Williams, P., 'Anglo-Soviet relations and regional security problems', *Memorandum to the Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report, Session 1985-86, Sov/39*, pp.344-345.

160 *Memorandum from the FCO to the Foreign Affairs Committee, , 23/79-80/FM*, op.cit., p.1. Also see 'UK-Soviet relations', *Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report, Session 1985-86*, 26 March 1986, pp.xix.

161 Williams, *Sov/39*, op.cit., p.343.

162 See *Cmnd Papers 7826, 8212, 8529, 8951, 9227, 9430, 9763, 101* and *344* for details of NATO and Warsaw Pact force structure and quantities of armaments.

163 *'Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1980'*, Cmnd. 7826-I, *April 1980. Examples of new class of Soviet Ships:*

- Typhoon Ballistic Missile Submarines (SSBNs) which were to carry 20 new solid-propellant strategic nuclear missiles
- Oscar Submarines, which had at least 20 new anti-ship cruise missiles with increased range: (both these types of Submarine were launched in 1980 and were bigger than any types in the West).
- Kirov Class – a 25,000 ton nuclear-powered cruiser – and 2 further first-of-class surface warships. The first of another new class of cruiser was developed in 1981. See Statement on the Defence Estimates 1981, Cmnd 8212-I.

164 Statement by Sir Clive Whitmore (the then Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Defence) in *Defence Committee, Third Report, Session 1984-85*, 23 May 1985, pp.18-19.

165 Statement by Malcolm Rifkind (the then Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs), *Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report, Session 1985-86*, 26 March 1986, p.299.

166 'Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1981', *Cmnd 8212-I*, p.4.

167 Gill, Rockingham, R., 'Soviet oil in the 1980s: shortage or surplus', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.121, no.2, 2 June 1976. As Chaplin states in November 1977 the Russians officially

admitted that they would find it difficult to supply Eastern Europe with oil in three years time, and that by the mid-1980s they would have to tighten belts at home. See, Dennis, Chaplin, 'Soviet oil and the security of the Gulf', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.123, no.4, December 1978.

168 Williams, P., *Sov/39*, op.cit., pp.346-347.

169 Conquest, R., *Memorandum to the Foreign Affairs Committee, 42/79-80/FM*, p.24. Also see Whetten, Lawrence, 'The Soviet-Cuban presence in the Horn of Africa', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.123, 3 September 1978, pp.39-43, and Cameron, Sir Neil (the then Marshal of the Royal Air Force), 'Defence and the changing scene', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.125, no.1, March 1980.

170 See for example *Cmnd 7826-I*, p.5; and *Cmnd 8212-I*, p.4.

171 Thatcher, M., *The Downing Street Years*, op.cit., p.87.

172 Warhurst, Geoffrey, 'Afghanistan – a dissenting appraisal', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.125, no.3, September 1980.

173 *Foreign Affairs Committee, Fifth Report, Session 1979-80*, 30 July 1980, p.ix.

174 Statements by Peter Blaker, *Foreign Affairs Committee, Fifth Report, Session 1979-80, Minutes of Evidence*, 26 March 1980, p.57.

175 *FCO Memorandum to the Foreign Affairs Committee, 23/79-80/FM*, 20 February 1980, p.3.

176 *Cmnd 8068*, 1980.

177 Thatcher, M., *The Downing Street Years*, op.cit., p.86.

178 Statement by Douglas Hurd in *Hansard*, vol.4, 'Foreign Affairs', 7 May 1981, column 281.

179 *Personal interview with Sir Alan Munro.* Head of the Middle East Department in the FCO during 1979.

180 Idem.

181 Idem.

182 *Personal interview with Lord Douglas Hurd.*

183 'President Carter's State of the Union Address', 23 January 1980, *State Department Basic Documents, 1977-1980*, no.15.

184 Frenchman, Michael, 'Oman', *The Times*, 9 May 1980. The unprecedented gathering of naval forces at the time including the immediate dispatch of up 26 US warships. The buildup also included the arrival of Soviet warships and submarines from the Soviet base at Aden in the PDRY.

185 Johns, Richard, 'Oman initials military collaboration pact with Washington', *The Financial Times*, 29 May 1980; Koenig, Marie, 'US, Oman conclude military facilities accord', *International Communication Agency*, 6 June 1980; Mullin, Denis, 'Behind Oman's move to bolster ties with US', *US News and World Report*, 8 March 1982; 'Oman emerges as vital outpost for US in Gulf', *The International Herald Tribune*, 26 March 1985, and Broder, Jonathan, 'Oman becomes America's most strategic ally in Persian Gulf', *The Chicago Tribune*, 10 November 1985. Also see Hartley, William D., 'A Mideast nation that's betting on US', *US News and World Report*, 26 May 1980. It was outposts such as Masira Island along with bases in Somalia and Kenya that Carter hoped would provide strength to the RDF and his Doctrine.

186 'Oman: from backward to Westward', *Middle East Strategic Report*, 24 February 1984, Also see Frenchman, *The Times*, 9 May 1980, op.cit.

187 'Statement on the Defence Estimates', 1985, *Cmnd* 9430, p.31.

188 Statement by Mrs. Thatcher in *Hansard*, 5th Series, vol.1000, 'Prime Minister (American visit)', 2 March 1981, column 19. Also see *Hansard*, vol.1, 17 March 1981, pp.187-189.

189 Statement by Lord Carrington in *Foreign Affairs Committee, Fifth Report, Session 1979-80*, 30 July 1980, p.xx.

190 'Statement on the Defence Estimates', *Cmnd 8212-I*, p.5

191 Bates, E.A., 'The Rapid Deployment Force – fact or fiction', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.126, no.2, June 1981.

192 For further confirmation on this see Walker, Andrew, 'Oman – in search of military autonomy', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 14 December 1985, p.1289.

193 Statement by Lord Carrington in *Foreign Affairs Committee, Fifth Report, Session 1980-81, Minutes of Evidence*, 11 March 1981, p.63.

194 US concerns over attacks on neutral shipping in 1984 prompted the Reagan Administration to dispatch 200 Stinger missiles to Saudi Arabia while acting under the President's special authority in Section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act to waive the normal 30-day waiting period after Congressional notification. See 'Grave concern expressed over Gulf escalation', *Official Text, United States Information Service*, 30 May 1984, and 'US Stinger sale to Saudi Arabia justified by emergency', *Official Text, United States Information Service*, 7 June 1984.

195 See 'Roles and objectives of the Armilla Patrol and ... how its scale and tasking have changed since 1980', *Memorandum from the FCO, GF/6, to the Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report, Session 1987-88*, pp.108-109.

196 As at 25 January 1988 the Armilla Patrol (including CIMNEL) consisted of the following ships:

| | |
|---|---|
| **HMS Scylla** | **- Leander Class Frigate** |
| **HMS Battleaxe** | **- Type 22 Frigate** |
| **HMS York** | **- Type 42 Destroyer** |
| **HMS Tidespring** | **- Tanker** |
| **HMS Harworth** | **- Hunt Class MCMV** |
| HMS Bicester | - Hunt Class MCMV |
| HMS Brocklesby | - Hunt Class MCMV |
| HMS Brecon | - Hunt Class MCMV |
| HMS Abdiel | - MCM Command Ship |
| HMS Diligence | - Support Ship |

197 Statement by Ian Stewart (the then Minister of State for Defence) in *Hansard*, vol.120, 28 October 1987, columns 311-312. Also see statements by Sir Geoffrey Howe in *Hansard*, vol.120, 'Iran-Iraq conflict', 21 July 1987, column 207; further statements by Ian Stewart in *Hansard*, vol.122, 'Persian Gulf', 10 November 1987, columns 160-161; statement by David Mellor in *Hansard*, vol.112, 'Gulf Shipping', 1 July 1987, columns 485-486; *Hansard*, vol.120, 'The Gulf', 21 October 1987, columns 723, 725, and 728, and *Hansard*, vol.123, 'Romanian Vessel Fundulae', 2 December 1987, column 593.

198 Statement by David Mellor in *Hansard*, vol.131, 'Persian Gulf (developments)', 18 April 1988, column 552. Mellor went on to state that if no self-defensive action on the part of the Western navies was to follow, 'it would give [Iran] carte blanche to become involved in further actions such as mine-laying', Ibid., column 554. As far as defence of Merchant vessels was concerned indications were that Armilla Vessels were protecting more ships that all the other navies put together. For example the February 1988 figures for escorting merchant vessels are as follows: Royal Navy – 60, US Navy – 15, USSR – 6, France – 7, Italy –5.

199

| Attack by | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 (to 1 June) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Iraq | 23 | 31 | 51 | 86 | 32 |
| Iran | 18 | 13 | 39 | 79 | 35 |

200 'Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1980', *Defence Committee, Second Report, Session 1979-80*, 23 April 1980.

201 Statement by Mrs. Thatcher in *Hansard*, vol.131, 'Debate on the Address', 3 November 1982, column 24.

202 'The United Kingdom defence programme: the way forward', *Cmnd 8288*, p.5.

203 'Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1987', *Cmnd 101-I*, p.22.

204 Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1981', *Cmnd 8212-I*, p.5.

205 See statements by Lord Carrington in *Foreign Affairs Committee, Fifth Report, Session 1979-80, Minutes of Evidence*, 2 July 1980, p.236.

206 Statement by Douglas Hurd in 'Afghanistan: the Soviet invasion and its consequences for British policy', *Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 1980-81, Minutes of Evidence*, 28 January 1981, p.24.

207 'A base by any other name', *The Middle East*, August 1977.

208 'Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1985', *Cmnd 9430-I*, p.31.

209 See Bulloch, John, 'Nott agrees to lend Oman more officers', *The Daily Telegraph*, 28 March 1981, Fisk, Robert, 'Favourable signs for Mrs. Thatcher's visit', *The Times*, 22 April 1981, and Woollacott, Martin, 'Oman leader presses Thatcher for support', *The Guardian*, 24 April 1981. This article reported on the extent of British commitment to Oman as, in the face of increased rebel activity, a British SAS company was deployed to assist the Omani forces. The rebel activity was probably a reference to the Dhofari rebels who had in the past received support from PDRY. See for example, 'SAS trains special unit for Oman', *The Daily Telegraph*, 24 August 1983.

210 Ballantyne, Aileen, 'General heads for Oman', *The Guardian*, 10 August 1981. Also see, 'Strong protection for the oil lanes', *The Financial Times*, 13 January 1983. For further details on Major General John Watts' appointment see 'Ex SAS Commander to head the Oman Army', *The Guardian*, 23 August 1984.

211 'Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1985', *Cmnd 9430-I*, p.32.

212 See 'Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1980', *Cmnd 7826-I*, p.44; also see 'Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1981', *Cmnd 8212-I*, p.31.

213 **Naval Task Group Deployments**

1979 - A Task Group consisting of 2 destroyers, 3 frigates and 3 Royal Navy Auxiliaries which sailed for a seven month deployment to the Far East.

1980 - Task Group 7 month deployment through the Suez Canal to North East Asia.

1983 - First major Task Group deployment since 1980. The Group consisted of HMS Invincible and a number of frigates and RFAs. The Group left Portsmouth in September 1983 on a 7 month deployment.

1986 - GLOBAL 86 was referred to in the 1987 Defence Estimates as the first circumnavigation of the world by a Royal Navy Task Group for ten years. The Group consisted of the aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious and a number of warships and RFAs. The Group exercised with friendly navies, visiting 21 countries in North America, the Far East, Australasia and the Indian Ocean where it conducted the Saif Sareea exercise with Oman.

1987 - Purple Warrior was the largest amphibious exercise mounted by the UK since 1945. Held in the Irish Sea and south-west Scotland, this exercise was designed to develop Britain's ability to react to a crisis outside the NATO area. The force comprised 39 ships (including HM Ships Ark Royal, Intrepid, and the Illustrious) and 2 Brigades: the 3rd Commando Brigade and the 5th Airborne Brigade.

214 See *Hansard*, vol.108, 'RAF (debate)', 13 January 1987, column 1054.

215 See statements by Mrs. Thatcher in *Hansard, 5th Series*, vol.1000, 'Prime Minister (American visit)', 2 March 1981, column 20.

216 'Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1980', *Cmnd 7826-I*, p.41.

217 'Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1980', *Defence Committee, Second Report, Session 1979-80*, 23 April 1980, p.vii.

218 Statement by Francis Pym (the then Secretary of State for Defence), in *Defence Committee, Second Report, Session 1979-80, Minutes of Evidence*, 17 April 1980, p.63.

219 See statements by John Nott in *Defence Committee, Second Report, Session 1980-81, Minutes of Evidence*, 30 April 1981, pp.45-56. Also see 'Statement on the Defence Estimates', *Cmnd 8212-I*, p.32.

220 See *Cmnd 8288*, p.11. This paper confirmed the improvements as the stockpiling of basic army equipment, the designation of HQ-Eight Field Force to plan and command operations, measures to increase the airlift capability of Hercules aircraft, and the fitting of Station-keeping radar equipment.

221 'The Falklands Campaign: the lessons', *Cmnd 8758*, December 1982, pp.32-33.

222 *Cmnd 8758*, ibid., p.34.

223 'Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1983', *Cmnd 8951-I*, p.12.

224 'Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1984', *Cmnd 9227-I*, p.32. This *Command Paper* also reconfirmed the Hercules 'stretch' programme, station-keeping equipment, the purchase of 6 Tristars, and the formation of a VC-10 tanker squadron.

225 Idem. HMS Diligence was the support vessel assigned to the Armilla Patrol.

226 There are numerous official statements indicating the improvement in Anglo-Soviet relations. For more information on this see for example, *Hansard*, vol.99, 'Foreign Affairs', 18 June 1986, column 1089; *Hansard*, vol.114, 'Foreign Affairs', 7 April 1987, column 181; *Hansard*, vol.118, 'Debate on the Address (Foreign Affairs)', 26 June 1987, column 219; *Hansard*, vol.142, 'Debate on the Address', 25 November 1988, columns 336 and 343; amongst numerous other sources.

227 *Personal interview with Sir Frank Cooper.*

228 *Personal interview with Lord Douglas Hurd.*

## Chapter 3: Changes to Britain's threat perceptions: 1989-July 1990

### Introduction

Chapter 2 drew upon Thatcherite discourse during the period 1979-1988 in an attempt to analyse the extent to which economic factors could be perceived as influencing British foreign policy towards the GCC States. The analysis showed that economic factors were indeed an important element in the discourse, as attention was drawn to numerous British politicians and defence industries, all of whom were active during this period in attempting to increase sales to the region. It is in this light that the chapter further considered the question of threats as perceived by the British government and reported on the effects of the Iran-Iraq war and the concern over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In testing the hypothesis, therefore, it is possible to assert that the economic imagery prevalent in Thatcherite discourse did indeed provide a framework for British policy towards the region..

The purpose of this chapter is now to extend discursive analysis to July 1990, the month before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. As in chapter 2, the range of issues to be considered includes the continuing scrutiny of British economic interests in the GCC States and a consideration of the changes that took place during this period. Of particular relevance were the ceasefire between Iran and Iraq, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the improvement in relations between Britain and the Soviet Union. These changes will not be complete, however, without a consideration of the emergence of a new range of threat perceptions, one of which was concern regarding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The final section, therefore, will analyse the British Government's assessment of this particular threat in the context of the Persian Gulf. This analysis is relevant as a precursor to the British Government's active participation in establishing the conditions imposed on Iraq by Section C of Security Council Resolution 687, which was adopted after the Second Gulf War (see chapter 4 and Appendix 4).

### Section 1: Thatcherite discourse: 1989-July 1990, the prominence of economics

Chapter 2 contended that the prominence of material factors in the discourse suggests that encouraging defence sales was seen by the British government as a means of countering Britain's economic decline. Yates indicated that the image of British

economic decline continued into this period, and stated that the decline in Britain's manufacturing outside the defence industrial base had the potential of undermining the country's economic and national security: 'We appear to have transformed ourselves altogether too rapidly into a service economy. One symptom of this is that we are unable to generate enough exports to pay for our own import bill'.[1]

The potential for reduction in East-West tension (see section 2) prompted the Labour Party to advocate the establishment of a Defence Conversion Agency whereby resources allocated for defence purposes could be switched to civilian sectors. However, the importance which the Conservative leadership attached to defence sales prompted the following statement by Alan Clark: 'It is absolutely absurd that the most successful parts of British industry in exports should be forced to desist from what they do well and be diverted into work that is thought to be socially acceptable...'[2] Similarly Yates advocated the need to develop a progressive defence industry and claimed that arguments that there were large immediate gains to be obtained by switching resources out of defence were wrong: 'UK defence industries have a very strong positive balance of trade. If this did not exist, and if all of our defence equipment had to be imported from overseas, Britain's overall trading position would be very much worse than the £20 billion or so deficit predicted for this year'.[3]

In addition, the Public Accounts Committee was to conclude in 1989 that, although the prime responsibility for defence exports lay with industry 'given the enormous economic and other benefits deriving from defence exports, it is government policy to support such exports whenever this is compatible with the United Kingdom's wider strategic, political, economic and security interests'.[4] Government support for the defence industry was provided by a number of central government organisations, with the Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO) acting as the focal point for all such activities. Its stated purpose was to '...assist [UK] companies to export more defence equipment and services within the guidelines of the Government's foreign, military and economic policy', and by being part of the Ministry of Defence it was recognised by potential foreign customers as the UK's representative in the defence sales field.[5]

In addition to help from the DESO, the Government utilised Service Attachés, officers from the Armed Forces posted to British Embassies and High Commissions overseas, whose purpose was to undertake a wide range of defence-related duties including support for defence exports. Further help was provided by aiding the establishment of defence trade fairs in potential customer areas such as the GCC States.[6]

Such sales promotion exercises were deemed to serve two inter-related uses. Not only did they aid the defence industry to sell its equipment overseas but, as Sir Peter Levene was to state, they enabled the MOD to recover up to £60 million a year in commercial exploitation levies.

> ... you must not forget that we are in a rather unusual position because the Ministry of Defence gets back very considerable sums of money ... in our commercial exploitation levy. So we are not doing this just to help industry. The more that they sell of equipment which we have designed, the more money flows back into the Ministry of Defence ... we get back some tens of millions, £50 or £60 million a year ... in royalties in effect. So we do get a fairly good payback for a lot of the work that we help the companies to achieve.[7]

As specified in chapter 2, IMS Ltd. played a significant role in encouraging arms exports by acting as the commercial arm of the MOD, and this role continued to be expanded during this period. The reason for this was that, whereas previously the DSO (as it was originally known) had actually sold equipment to overseas customers, as more of these commercial activities went outside the ownership of the MOD and were put into commercial hands it was in the interests of defence companies that they themselves be closely involved in the negotiation of contracts. As Sir Peter Levene stated: 'Most often the overseas governments would want to contract directly with industry [and] there [may be occasions] where they would like to have a direct contract with an umbrella organisation and in that sort of case [IMS] might be put forward as the people to do that. Increasingly today ... the overseas governments tend to go to a large British prime contractor to do that for them ...'[8] It should be noted that the Government had taken a major step towards commercialising its defence sales activities earlier in the decade with the sale of Royal Ordnance to British Aerospace in 1987, thereby making that company the biggest defence manufacturer in the West outside the US.[9] The use of such contractors as a first point of contact for overseas governments showed the extent of the belief in the MOD that commercialising its activities would aid the sale of defence equipment. However, the fact that there was a clear and continuing dialogue between the DESO and defence companies indicated the MOD's continuing interest in the activities of the defence industry.[10]

During this period the export of defence equipment continues to feature prominently in the discourse. As Tim Sainsbury was to state in the House of Commons in February 1989: 'The British defence industry has an excellent record of export achievement. We shall do everything possible within the necessary constraints of our

national policies to ensure that this success continues'. Furthermore in March of the same year he went on to state, 'The success achieved by our defence manufacturers in the past year maintains Britain's position as a major world exporter of defence equipment'.[11]

As between 1979 and 1988, the States in the Persian Gulf region, and most notably the GCC member States, were seen as natural markets for British defence products and as an area where national constraints on such equipment did not apply. Numerous statements by politicians during the current period of analysis indicated that relations between Britain and the GCC States remained excellent, with contacts being maintained on a regular basis. The following statement by William Waldegrave (the then Minister of State for the FCO) supports this contention: 'Our relations with the Arab States of the Gulf are, without exception, excellent', and similarly, with regard to relations between the EC and the GCC Lynda Chalker stated: 'The [EC's] relations with the [GCC] are excellent. A first stage economic co-operation agreement and a political joint declaration were signed last June'[12], thereby indicating the importance that Britain's partners in the EC attached to their relations with the GCC members.[13]

One consequence of this continuing close contact between Britain and the GCC States was that the British defence industry continued to build upon the success of contracts such as the *Al Yamamah* deal with Saudi Arabia. The first part of this contract was signed in 1986 and covered the supply (amongst other equipment) of 72 *Panavia* Tornados (see chapter 2). As Cordesman specified, Middle Eastern States signed 75 percent of all new arms agreements affecting the Third World during 1982-85, and the Persian Gulf region in particular was seen as dominating the world traffic in arms imports. Despite declining oil revenues, the Middle East remained the key market for virtually every major arms exporter and this trend was to continue during the period in question.[14]

The Saudi Arabian market remained crucial to the British defence industry since, in July 1988, a Memorandum of understanding was signed on an extension of the initial project, which came to be known as *Al Yamamah* 2. Although the contract was signed in 1988 (within the remit of chapter 2) the effects of the extension were to be felt in the periods analysed in this chapter and the next, since it now included the supply of another 46 Tornadoes, 48 Hawks, 90 Westland-built Black Hawk helicopters and 6 Vosper-Tornycroft minehunters of the Sandown–class. The implications of this were obvious since the links established between the Saudi and British economies were now expected

to extend well into the 21st Century regardless of any further agreements.[15] In addition to the aircraft, the contract covered the construction of two Tornado bases and naval facilities and the aircraft were to be armed with the full range of RAF equipment. This ensured that the implications of the contract were much wider, since a large number of other British companies would be involved and would consequently benefit.[16]

Chapter 2 highlighted the importance accorded to defence markets by several other nations and indicated that Britain had to contend with its Western allies, the US and France. A particularly important factor was the stormy nature of the US-Saudi defence relationship, which was one reason for the success of British defence companies and politicians in securing lucrative contracts. This also continued into this period: 'Misunderstanding has been the hallmark of Saudi-US relations for the past few years ... ultimately US policy toward Saudi Arabia is based on neglect and ignorance by most policy-makers and subject to the "either-or" attitudes which tend to force Washington to think in terms of black and white'.[17] The pressures exerted by the powerful pro-Israeli lobby on the US Administration meant that Washington had to continue to rebuff Saudi Arabia's requests for arms, and this in turn led to a Saudi search for other suppliers. European States such as Britain were, therefore, well placed to reap the benefits brought about by US internal political division.

Anglo-Saudi offset negotiations also continued to dominate the defence relationship. Soon after *Al Yamamah* 1 Saudi Arabia had specified that it would seek an increase in joint ventures between British and Saudi companies, the purpose of which would be technology transfer and an attempt to offset the value of Saudi arms purchases. While it was obvious that the British Government could not force British companies to invest in Saudi Arabia, the importance of the Anglo-Saudi defence relationship to the British Government meant that plans were drawn up by the MOD in response to Saudi demands for economic benefits to compensate for the expected outlay of more than £15 billion on the two part purchase of British military equipment. Subsequently, George Younger underlined the UK's commitment to establishing an offset programme for British companies[18] and as Tim Sainsbury was to state in the House:

> ... the offset programme is aimed at encouraging and assisting the creation of viable and profitable joint and other commercial ventures in any sector between the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabian companies. It is a broadly based and flexible programme designed to provide the maximum benefit to the economies of both countries, and is open to all United Kingdom companies, not just defence contractors.[19]

Suggestions for potential collaborative projects between Britain and Saudi Arabia included proposals such as the involvement of Royal Ordnance in developing the Kingdom's defence industrial infrastructure; the establishment of computer operator training centres; the development of manufacturing plants designed to produce specialist yarn for use in agricultural and horticultural netting; the establishment of a support operation for the Hawk and Tornado aircraft; and the setting up of a centre to provide an overhaul and repair service for a range of missiles.[20] Ultimately, by the end of 1989 seven proposals (with a further two to follow) were submitted to Saudi Arabia by the MOD as part of the UK's effort to provide offsets for the arms deals signed in 1985 and 1988. Together the deals were expected to be valued at close to £1 billion and they demonstrated that the *Al Yamamah* Economic Offset Programme was not limited to defence sectors or to *Al Yamamah* contractors. Consequently, it had the effect of further strengthening the economic and defence links between the two countries.[21]

By April 1990 there were indications that Saudi Arabia was considering a further substantial arms deal with Britain for the supply of tanks to replace its ageing fleet of 600. Although the favoured tank had been the American Abrams M1A2 the Saudis appeared keen to look at Britain's Challenger 2 tank when the US raised the costs of the Abrams by $5 million per tank following the decision to halt its production for the US Army. Consequently, the Challenger 2, being developed by Vickers Defence Systems of Leeds, was back in the running and securing this contract was crucial for Vickers since it would assure the future of the tank and of the 1,600 workforce.[22] Ultimately, the Saudi decision was taken after the Second Gulf War and is therefore considered in chapter 4. However, mentioning it here gives an indication of the importance of the market for British defence companies and the competition involved in securing defence exports.

One further example demonstrates the importance of Saudi Arabia as a market for British defence products. Following low demand for helicopters during 1988, the future of the Westland helicopter company was once again in doubt. Two years earlier Mrs. Thatcher had, against the advice of her Defence Secretary, firmly backed a bid to save Britain's Westland with American involvement and the possibility of a further rescue package for the helicopter manufacturer was therefore likely to seriously embarrass the Government. The political controversy over Westland had begun in 1986, when arguments about saving the company from bankruptcy had resulted in the resignations of Leon Brittan (the then Trade and Industry Secretary) and Michael

Heseltine (the then Defence Secretary). The arguments concerned Heseltine's insistence that Westland should link up with other European defence companies while others in the Cabinet, including the Prime Minister, felt that the company should take the best offer, irrespective of its origins. Ultimately, the American helicopter manufacturer Sikorsky was allowed a minority stake which meant that Westland could manufacture the Black Hawk under licence and it was expected that large export orders would materialise. The failure to secure export contracts, however, meant that the latest gap in the order books was likely to lead to another serious cash crisis and this time it was unlikely that the Government would advocate a rescue package.[23]

The latest rescue for Westland, however, came about through the Saudi decision to purchase the Black Hawk helicopter from the company. As White stated, 'Under Britain's new government-to-government arms supply agreement with Riyadh, Westland is expected to obtain more than 80 orders, helping to fill a gap that was raising the what-to-do-about-Westland issue once again'.[24] Although the orders did not alleviate Westland's long-term problems, they demonstrate once again the importance of GCC markets for British defence industry.

Further evidence that close defence relations existed between Britain and Saudi Arabia was provided by the numerous trips that British politicians undertook to Saudi Arabia. The second part of *Al Yamamah* itself was negotiated by George Younger (the then Secretary of State for Defence) late in 1988 while on an official visit. Furthermore, following his appointment as Chief of Defence Staff in June 1989, Sir David Craig visited Saudi Arabia to familiarise himself with the defence relations between the two countries, thereby suggesting that the relationship extended beyond a merely economic nature.[25] Further support for this is provided in the next chapter when the analysis shifts to a consideration of the extent of Britain's military commitment to the GCC States, including Saudi Arabia, in the wake of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

British trade with the other GCC States also continued to develop during this period. Although not on the same scale as with Saudi Arabia, it included contracts such as the sale of BAe Hawk MK 100s to the United Arab Emirates and the upgrading of Qatar's Westland Sea King Helicopters.[26] Oman, in particular, continued to feature prominently in British defence plans for the region. In spite of the British withdrawal from east of Suez, the UK's defence ties with the State were never broken. Two direct military interventions, supplies of military equipment and instructors for the Sultan's armed forces, and military exercises (such as *Saif Sareea* in 1986 – see chapter 2)

ensured an uninterrupted British presence in the region which made a substantial contribution to the stability of the Straits of Hormuz. The British commitment to Oman's stability also continued into this period. The Omani armed forces had been under British tutelage since the Dhofar rebellion and the accession of Sultan Qaboos, during the current period of analysis the commanders of both the Air Force and the Navy were British and, as Young stated: '...the connection has been enhanced by Sultan Qaboos to the point where it has become part of national defence strategy'.[27]

The importance of Oman had become apparent between 1980 and 1988 since 'a global dimension ha[d] developed out of the strategic position of Oman in the context of world-wide dependence on the Gulf oil-flow, the pressure from Islamic fundamentalism, and the various forms of power-projection by both superpowers into the Southwest Asian region'.[28] Following the end of the Iran-Iraq war Oman's need for powerful allies and efficient armed forces was obvious, and it is in this context that the British role in contributing to Oman's stability must be considered. The longstanding main defence requirement for the Omani Armed Forces was the ability to intercept foreign probe aircraft or any other infringement of Omani airspace, and this had now been extended to cover the entire country and its territorial waters.[29] British Aerospace had been closely involved in developing the Integrated Air Defence Systems (IADS), which had been set up as far back as 1974 but had been much improved during the 1989s. Oman's acquisition of British aircraft represented a significant development in this context and although originally it planned to purchase RAF Tornados, Oman ultimately decided in favour of the cheaper Hawk jets.[30]

The above analysis has examined the discourse of the period between 1989 and August 1990, and has found that economic factors and British economic interests in the GCC States continued to feature prominently. This was most vividly demonstrated by the close involvement of both leading British politicians and defence industry officials in the negotiations to secure various lucrative contracts. Mrs. Thatcher herself, the various Defence Secretaries, and leading players from organisations such as DESO, all continued to pursue contracts throughout this decade. Intense competition between close Western allies such as Britain, the US and France over contracts further demonstrated the importance of the GCC States, and the internal political divisions in the US provided opportunities for other European suppliers, such as Britain, to capitalise and establish long-term defence links with important GCC Members such as Saudi Arabia.

The analysis above has once again demonstrated the prevalence of economic factors in Thatcherite discourse, this time during the period 1989 - 1990. Although some of the analysis has been concerned with issues prior to 1989 their relevance has its basis in the continuing efforts by elements within the British government and industry to retain and build upon contracts secured in the earlier period, thereby reinforcing the ongoing importance of economic material interests. As in the first period analysed (1979-1988), Britain's economic interests in the GCC States developed against a background of conflict and instability in the region. Revolutionary changes, invasion and conflict provided sources for concern during 1980-1988 and here attention now shifts to British threat perceptions vis-à-vis the Persian Gulf region between 1989 and August 1990.

**Section 2: Changing British Threat Perceptions**

Chapter 2 contended that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, revolutionary change in Iran, and the Iran-Iraq conflict were perceived to be the main threats to British economic interests in the GCC States during 1980-1988. This section will now consider the changes which occurred at the end of 1988, and the ensuing effects on British threat perceptions in the context of the Gulf region.

The first dramatic change that had a bearing on the Gulf was the end of the Cold War, and arguably the impact of the changes which occurred in 1989 was to be felt strongest in the intra-European context. However, the process of change in the Soviet attitude towards the West had global implications and the Gulf was among the first of the world's regions to be affected. The starting point in any inquiry into the changes therefore has to be the so-called "new thinking" in Soviet foreign policy as developed by Gorbachev (the then President of the USSR). An assessment by the Foreign Affairs Committee in 1989 concluded as follows:

> Mr. Gorbachev's speech to the UN General Assembly on 7 December 1988 announced a large unilateral cut in troops and armaments. The speech created an immediate impact not only because of the proposed troop cuts, but also because it sought to provide a new de-ideologised basis for Soviet foreign policy; and to claim that, as far as the Kremlin's policies were concerned, confrontation and offensive military postures were at an end.

Furthermore

> The spirit of *glasnost* has encouraged an increasingly frank and public reappraisal of Soviet foreign policy. A desire for a period of external stability to allow the radical programme of reform to proceed at home has led Mr. Gorbachev to seek a better relationship with the West ... including reduced tensions in regional conflicts.[31]

The Committee also concluded that changes in the Soviet Union had occurred not only with regard to foreign policy, but also in substance, with the most dramatic action being taken in Afghanistan. Whereas the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 had created conditions for potential conflict between the Soviet Union and the West (including Britain) in the region, the withdrawal at the end of 1988 can be seen to have dramatically altered British perceptions vis-à-vis the Gulf.

> A major element in the better atmosphere between East and West has been the Soviet decision to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan and the implementation on time ... of that decision. It represents the most visible move yet away from the concept of peaceful co-existence as a period of East-West stand-off under which Soviet ideological and other ambitions in different parts of the world could be pursued with impunity. It has been accompanied by signs of greater readiness to use Soviet influence in favour of peaceful political solutions in other regional conflicts rather than an inclination to see all such issues through the prism of East-West rivalry ...'[32]

Statements by politicians in the House confirmed the new mood of optimism that had emerged. During a Foreign Affairs debate Minister for Foreign Affairs Lynda Chalker referred to the accelerated political reforms in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and progress towards resolving long-standing regional conflicts as being of major importance.[33] Later, Secretary Douglas Hurd confirmed the perception that the changes would last: 'In 1989, as this astonishing pace of change continues, we have begun to hope that it may prove to be lasting. There may, of course, be halts and reverses, but it would be hard now to re-create the iron curtain'.[34]

Apart from the political changes that were occurring across Eastern Europe there was a further source of optimism – the announcements by Gorbachev of dramatic unilateral cuts in the Soviet troop deployments. At the end of 1988 Gorbachev announced the removal of 50,000 troops and the disbanding of numerous tank divisions from Eastern Europe.[35] These announcements, combined with the political changes, led the Defence Committee to believe that the implications for British defence policy were likely to be far-reaching. Gorbachev's demilitarisation and de-ideologisation of Soviet foreign policy undermined the cohesion of the Warsaw Pact, and the subsequent

unilateral force reductions meant that the military threat to Europe itself had abated. As a result of this British politicians were to realise that the Soviet Union would no longer be able to launch a coalition war against the West.[36] This was confirmed by Tom King in the House when he stated, 'In military terms, that means that after the withdrawal of Soviet forces and the implementation of the reductions in conventional arms envisaged ... it will be difficult to imagine any conventional attack of any strategic size by the Soviet Union across NATO territory'.[37]

Inevitably this changing relationship, progress in arms negotiations, the statements by Gorbachev, the withdrawal from Afghanistan, and a different approach towards regional conflict prompted the question of whether the Cold War was over. In 1989 the Foreign Affairs Committee stated '...cumulatively there have been remarkable shifts in attitudes and approach by the Soviet Union which certainly justify us in concluding that interpreting the Cold War as it has been commonly understood for the last 40 years will require drastic revision, if not abandonment'.[38]

As chapter 2 noted, the Soviet Union had spent the two previous decades building up its military forces in the form of nuclear, conventional and in particular naval power so that it could operate globally. There were indications that it had shifted its attention towards the Third World in light of the dangers of confrontation in Europe, and its invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was quoted as supporting this possibility.[39] However, in the face of the withdrawal it appeared that the Soviet Union had renounced the political and strategic objectives which had led to the invasion. This had wider implications since, as chapter 2 indicated, although there were differing views over their motives for the invasion, occupying Afghanistan had given the Soviets '... more opportunities for activity in South West Asia, which, of course, is ... sensitive ... in relation to the supply of oil'.[40] Although it is impossible to be conclusive about Soviet motivations in Afghanistan, there was no doubt that the British Government collectively viewed the Soviet invasion as a seriously destabilising factor for the Persian Gulf.[41] As a direct result of the Soviet withdrawal, however, the British Government had to drastically alter its perception of the threats to the region.

At the same time there were indications that the Iran-Iraq war was coming to an end when Iran accepted Security Council Resolution (SCR) 598. Indeed, as the Foreign Affairs Committee was to conclude, there was increased willingness on the part of the Soviet Union to co-operate in mitigating the effects of the Gulf War and it consequently

played an important role in bringing the conflict to an end.[42] Following the failure of its offensives (between 1980 and 1982) Iraq began calling for a return to peace, and this desire for a return to the pre-conflict situation became greater between 1982 and 1987 in light of Iranian counter offensives which resulted in Iran occupying Iraqi territory. However, despite Iran's successes, Iraqi air and missile superiority became increasingly obvious, since financial assistance from various GCC States had allowed it to renew and update its equipment at the start of 1988, which in turn meant that Iraq was able to resume massive air and missile raids on Iranian towns. Economic problems, a lack of foreign credit facilities, decreasing oil prices and the Western naval presence in the Gulf all combined to persuade Iranian leaders that they had no hope of winning the war. In addition, the fact that Soviet co-operation was all important in securing the ceasefire must be stressed since by withdrawing from Afghanistan it ceased to be a threat to the Gulf region, and by siding with the US and Britain in the Security Council, it gave SCR 598, when adopted, the necessary authority to encourage Iran to accept its terms.[43]

As a direct result of the ceasefire, the absence of any recent mining, and in light of the successful completion of the 300-mile route check by WEU navies (known as *Operation Cleansweep*), the British Government was able to decide that there was no longer any suitable task to justify replacing the three RN MCMVs currently on duty in the Gulf. The vessels, therefore, returned to other priority tasks in home waters and were not replaced. However, the Government did decide to keep three MCMVs earmarked for 'rapid return to the Gulf should circumstances warrant it'.[44]

Chapter 2 identified the anti-Western bias of the Iranian Revolution as a potential threat to British interests in the Gulf States. The virulently anti-Western nature of the new Iranian regime, its territorial claims on Gulf States such as Bahrain, and its calls on other Shi'ites in the Arab world to revolt against their own governments increased the British sense of uncertainty. Under threat were the important Gulf markets and the oil and trade routes through the Straits of Hormuz. In 1990 a *Foreign Office background paper* concluded that throughout the 1980s Iran had exemplified a violent form of Shia militancy and that this had 'led the country to act outside accepted international norms' by encouraging 'the spread of fundamentalist militancy [notably by promoting the export of the revolution]'. The paper went on to state, however, that Iran had failed in its attempts to repeat the revolution in the Gulf States, thus providing evidence for the contention that the British Government had reassessed the threat following the end of the Iran-Iraq war.[45]

The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the subsequent end of the Cold War, the failure of Iran to export its revolution to the GCC States, and the Iran-Iraq ceasefire have been identified as events which feature prominently in the discourse of the period and therefore cannot be discounted in any assessment of British policy. The end of the Cold War led to a wider defence priority restructuring known as Options for Change whereby very substantial falls in defence expenditure were conceivable. However, numerous Government statements pointed to the fact that Britain's wider interests had to be considered in any assessment of defence restructuring. As Archie Hamilton stated during a defence debate:

> ... Let there be no doubt that NATO remains firmly committed to the central concepts underlying flexible response as the best means of maintaining effective prevention of war, which will be essential so long as the Soviet Union retains its awesome military potential. At the same time, post-war history shows that while we retain effective alliance deterrence, conflict is more likely to erupt in other parts of the world, rather than in Europe, and the possibility remains of the United Kingdom's interests out-of-area being threatened. Therefore, it is important that forces be retained which can contribute to security in other parts of the world ... As we reshape our contribution to NATO we need to provide forces with sufficient flexibility to contribute to out-of-area operations should they prove necessary.[46]

During the same debate the Secretary of State for Defence, Tom King, emphasised the need for adequate out-of-area forces, regardless of whether relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe improved. He referred to the need to be able to respond as necessary in a variety of countries, whether in conjunction with Britain's allies or alone, in the defence of British interests, and precedents for British military action outside Europe in the defence of its interests had already been established. Despite the potential for a reduction in regional conflicts as a result of the reduced global tensions, uncertainty remained, and the fact that the Warsaw Pact was now effectively defunct provided defence planners with an opportunity to appraise the probability and character of future challenges to British interests. The events of 1989 opened up the possibility of transferring resources previously used for continental defence to a wider role, and this was confirmed by Tom King when he stated:

> We shall need adequate forces to meet our commitments in the wider world outside Europe...That may be with some or all of our NATO allies and alone if necessary in defence of direct British interests. In some places that requires a specific garrison, and in others it can be met by a

> strategic reserve capable of rapid deployment, whether inside or outside NATO. We do not necessarily need separate forces under those separate headings. For example, some of the sea and air mobile elements of the forces in the United Kingdom designated for the reinforcement of British forces in Germany can have roles outside Europe as well. That is obviously true of other capabilities, such as frigates and aircraft...[47]

However, the Defence Select Committee was to recommend that the Government should remain strong on the issue of defence in light of emerging uncertainties. Although the Cold War officially ended in 1989 the Soviet Union was to remain Europe's strongest single military power for the foreseeable future.[48] Furthermore, in the context of the Persian Gulf there was still no signed peace treaty between Iran and Iraq even though a ceasefire had been declared, and Iran still sought to export its revolution to other States in the region.

**Section 3 – British threat perceptions: 1989-August 1990**

Changing circumstances in the international system led to changes in government discourse as it applied to the Soviet Union. Progress in arms control, and the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan gave rise to the possibility that the Cold War was over. In addition there was the possibility that the Iran-Iraq war would come to an end once Iran accepted the ceasefire resolution (SCR 598). These events contributed to changes in Britain's threat perceptions, and as has been shown above this was reflected in government discourse. One topic which began receiving increasing attention in the Options for Change debate was the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction including nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and their delivery systems – most specifically ballistic missiles. The Defence Committee concluded that the 'Process of arms control in Europe [might] have the effect of increasing armaments levels elsewhere, as manufacturers [sought] to offset the effects of a declining European market...'[49] This would in turn increase the risks of transferring technologies relevant for the so-called weapons of mass destruction to Third World countries. As Tom King stated in evidence to the Defence Committee

> ...one of the issues we have to consider in studying the Options for Change are what threats we may face and what may be the consequences in the future ... for instance, the growth of missile capability in a number of countries with which we do not normally associate them ... [also] the capability of nuclear, of chemical and of conventional warheads that

> might be attached to such missiles. We can access that intelligence and access those developments and the threat. Then we have to analyse what does that actually mean for us and what it might mean.[50]

A further statement by Tom King in the House confirmed that this issue was being considered by the Government: 'When one looks at the wider world, one sees that the biggest problem at present ... is the degree of proliferation and the variety of missile and warhead capabilities. There is no doubt we need to consider those aspects when looking at our defence plans'.[51]

The proliferation of nuclear weapons had long been an issue with the Government and British policy was based primarily on the premise noted by Archie Hamilton: 'On the non-proliferation treaty it is desirable that other countries should not have nuclear weapons. However, despite the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, such countries are developing a nuclear capability. That is a reality with which we have to deal'. In talking about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in general he later stated: 'We ... aim to prevent the proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons by providing strong support for arms control agreements and associated regimes...'[52]

Ballistic missile proliferation, on the other hand, had recently gained prominence when Gorbachev and Reagan, at their summit meeting in Moscow in 1988, referred to an increase in international concern over the moves made by various developing countries towards acquiring ballistic missile capability[53]. Iraq and Iran's use of ballistic missiles against each other's population centres in 1988 (the 'War of the Cities') had focused international attention on the problem[54]. Consequently, The *Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)* was established by a number of States (including Britain, the US, Canada, Japan, France, Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany) with the purpose of setting controls on the export of relevant technology.[55]

Tom King's predecessor, George Younger, had been equally concerned about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As early as June 1989 he stated:

> The existence of any of those types of weapons in the hands of anyone has to be a potential threat to the security of us and anyone else who is within the range of that. For this reason, I think [it] is of enormous importance that we should all attempt to discourage proliferation of these weapons in every way possible, and where they do not exist, we should do all we can to keep them out of a particular area ... The proliferation of these appalling weapons has to be discouraged.[56]

During this time, therefore, warnings of proliferation came from politicians and academics alike. Navias referred to the emergence of Third World States which were increasingly willing to challenge regional status quos and called the ballistic missile threat a 'truly global phenomena', with the most intense build up occurring in the Middle East.[57] Similarly in 1990, Karp regarded concern over the proliferation of ballistic missiles as having reached an unprecedented level of intensity in 1989, due largely to the reduction in tension between the superpowers: '...as traditional security fears ease, more attention is devoted to regional conflicts posing a more immediate danger to international peace and stability. The close relationship between the most serious proliferation threats, ballistic missiles, and the nuclear, chemical or biological warheads they can carry has created a new fear of arms races among emerging regional powers'.[58]

In the context of such States in the Persian Gulf region, Iraq was given the greatest level of publicity, and the "War of the Cities" demonstrated that it had ballistic missiles capable of reaching other States in the region. In addition to this, reports suggested that it was further developing its own capabilities, and evidence pointed to the *Al Hussein*, the *Al Abbas* and the *Al Aabed* surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs). The *Al Hussein* was first reported in mid-1987 to have a range of 650 km and was believed to be a modified Scud-B missile (originally developed by the Soviet Union) with a smaller payload to give it increased range. *The Al Abbas* was also claimed be a modified Scud-B missile, was first flight-tested in 1988, and reached a range of 900km. In addition, on 5 December 1989 Iraq announced that it had successfully launched the *Tamouz 1* slv (satellite launch vehicle), also stating that there had been 2 tests earlier of a new IRBM (intermediate range ballistic missile) called *Al-Aabed.* This missile was reported to have a range of 2000km and a payload capacity of 750kg and the various tests indicated that the two programmes were linked.[59]

Other evidence of Iraq's proliferation of WMD was provided by the fact that it was largely responsible for funding the Condor II project. This involved the development of a 2-stage, solid fuel missile with a range of 1,000km, and was initially a joint Egyptian-Argentinean venture, but Egypt and Argentina reportedly withdrew under intense pressure from the US and other members of the MTCR.[60] Closely linked to Iraq's ballistic missile projects were its nuclear weapon ambitions, and although the United Nations confirmed in 1991 that Iraq had been concealing a nuclear-weapons

programme (see chapter 4), there was evidence that Iraq had been suspected of a nuclear weapons programme prior to the invasion of Kuwait despite being a signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The Bazoft, Supergun and Nuclear Triggers incidents, as well as the Israeli bombing of Iraq's Osiris research reactor in 1981, all suggested that Iraq was attempting to acquire weapons of mass destruction, with the triggers' incident in particular pointing to the possibility that Iraq was only a few years away from acquiring a nuclear bomb.[61] Hurd subsequently provided confirmation that the UK Government regarded this incident as serious when he stated, 'Iraq is not the only power in the Middle East with nuclear ambitions. This episode underlines starkly the dangers for the whole world from the proliferation of nuclear weapons ... It also points to the vital need to solve by negotiation the wider conflicts in the Middle East that undoubtedly act as a spur to the proliferation of weapons in that region'.[62] In talking about the "wider conflicts" in the region the Arab-Israeli conflict was undoubtedly foremost in his mind. However, also of great importance was the fact that Iraq had just ended a brutal eight-year war with Iran during which time ballistic missiles and other weapons of mass destruction (specifically chemical weapons) had been used.[63] This had shown that conflicts in the Middle East were not entirely Arab-Israeli orientated but also involved other powers and issues completely divorced from the traditional conflict between Israel and the Arab world. This suggested that there would be future conflicts far removed from this issue and therefore, that Iraq's proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (amongst others) had to be viewed in the wider context. They were not only a threat to Israel but were seen to contribute to the instability already prevalent in the region and therefore could be perceived as a threat to British interests in the GCC States.

The general problem of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction was therefore viewed with increasing concern amongst British politicians. In the case of Iraq, this was a threat to the Gulf States since it created uncertainty in what was already a volatile region. Iraq's attempts to build up its military strength also had to be viewed in the context of Saddam Hussein's own ambitions. A decade earlier Iraq had invaded Iran on the basis that Ayatollah Khomeini's new regime was delicate and that Iraq would defeat Iran quickly. Three issues are central here: first, McKnight stated that 'Saddam was laying claim to the status which President Nasser of Egypt once enjoyed in Arab politics'.[64] A rapid victory over Iran would, undoubtedly, have provided Saddam Hussein with the status and prestige he sought from the Arab world, and, as chapter 2

showed, the Gulf States had a good deal to fear from a fundamentalist Iran intent on exporting its revolution, and so supported Iraq.

Second, although issues such as sovereignty over the *Shatt al-Arab* (the Arab River) had been resolved in the Algiers agreement of 1975, the Iraqis actually felt that the agreement had been imposed on them by a more powerful Iranian regime under the late Shah.[65] Furthermore, as Iraq lacked suitable access to the Gulf, a rapid blitzkreig into south western Iran would have secured this access once the eastern shores of the *Shatt al-Arab* had been captured. Prior to 1969 Iraq had controlled the entire river, but in the 1970s the Shah of Iran had renewed Iran's claims to a line drawn down the channel in the centre of the river. Although this may seem rational, since the river formed the boundary between the two countries, control over the river - which was Iraq's only real access to the Gulf – dominated Iraqi concerns.

Third, Bulloch and Morris suggest that Saddam Hussein desired to occupy and incorporate into a Greater Iraq the south-western region of Iran known as *Khuzestan* (referred to as *Arabistan* by Arabs). Saddam Hussein was attracted to this area because the region had an Arab population of over 3 million and contained most of Iran's oil wealth. This annexation would also have resulted in the creation of a buffer zone between Iran and Iraq.[66]

These territorial aims must be seen in the context of regional ambitions, and not merely in the Iranian context. Similarly, Saddam Hussein's distinctive attitude towards the Gulf States emerged quite early on in the Iran-Iraq war, as events did not proceed as he would have liked. Not only did the war drag on, he was also soon faced with overwhelming economic problems, and money borrowed from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Gulf States had to be used to finance the Iraqi economy. The important point is, however, that the Arab states were determined in their resolve to let Iraq fight the war alone, despite the fact that they had much to fear from a fundamentalist Iran intent on exporting its brand of Islamic militancy. Realising this, Saddam Hussein claimed that Iraq's war against Iran was about 'defending the Arab heartland from the threat of the Persian hordes'.[67]

One factor in Saddam Hussein's attitude after the Iran-Iraq war is of great relevance to the events prior to the invasion of Kuwait. The Iraqi regime used the fact that the country had survived the war to great effect, and claimed that Iraq had actually won the war. By asserting that his *victory* had been on behalf of the other Arab Gulf States, Saddam Hussein therefore found a premise upon which to base his

aim of extracting compensation from them for his now financially crippled economy. This claim was made in the early years of the war and indicated that not only did Saddam Hussein want territory from Iran, but also that he sought to dominate the GCC States.

Finally, there is evidence to suggest that the British intelligence community took the Iraqi threat seriously during this period. As Sir Derek Boorman (Chief of Defence Intelligence and Deputy Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) between 1985 – 88) stated during a personal interview:

> That was a very interesting episode because at that time, irrespective of the success of the Iraqi side or the Iranian side ... we consistently felt that in terms of overall threat, the threat came from Iraq at that stage ... there was a long term threat from Iran if you looked into the medium term, but the actual threat to stability at that time was Iraq. I am not saying that to you because subsequently we have been proved right, but I can tell you that I sat for many hours in Riyadh with very good intelligence arguing with the Saudis that Iraq was the problem. Yes look at Iran very carefully, but if you don't crack the problem with Iraq now, there is going to be instability.[68]

Furthermore, on the question of whether or not the British Government was receptive to the advice given, Sir Derek Boorman stated:

> I don't think there would be a distinction because we played absolutely straight, and the advice we would give as a team to the Saudis would be precisely the same as the advice we would be giving our own ministers. There might be exemptions because of reasons obviously obscure ... but the thread of our argument was a consistent one both within HMG and external.
>
> My observation that when Mrs. Thatcher was PM, putting politics to one side, was the most receptive PM almost probably of any time in the sense that she understood the value of intelligence, she understood the resources that were required, she understood the questions that had to be asked of the organisation, and she understood the importance of the product in the formulation of policy. So in short ... it was of prime importance to formulation, and I can think of many examples where I got personally involved, though there were overtures ... from intelligence assessments, which went right to the heart of the Cabinet and were taken most seriously.[69]

The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the subsequent improvement in relations between East and West, the end of the Iran-Iraq war, and Iran's failure to export its revolution to the Gulf States, meant therefore that the British Government felt a need to

reassess the range of threats confronting its strategic and economic interests in the Gulf region. Whereas the Armilla Patrol had remained on duty in the Gulf throughout the previous eight years, in 1989 decisions were taken that would affect the level of British military commitment to the region between 1989 and August 1990.

As stated above, the Government felt that it was no longer necessary to maintain the MCMVs in the Gulf in light of the ceasefire, and those vessels returned to home waters. However, since the situation in the Gulf region remained volatile, as identified by its ongoing threat assessment process, the Government believed it necessary to retain the Armilla Patrol in the Gulf region throughout the period leading up to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. As Waldegrave stated in December 1988, 'As ... the Prime Minister has made clear since the ceasefire came into effect, Royal Navy ships will remain in international waters in the Gulf so long as we judge that there is a job to be done in upholding freedom of navigation there', and just before the invasion in July 1990, Archie Hamilton confirmed that 'The Armilla Patrol will remain in the Gulf so long as there is a task to perform'.[70] As the above section has shown, the emergence of new threats and continuing vigilance over the threats which had destabilised the region between 1979-1988 meant that the Government continued to regard it as necessary to maintain the Patrol.

**Conclusion**

Chapter 2 suggested that the Conservatives, under Mr. Thatcher, considered defence sales during the period 1979-1988 to be of some importance. This emphasis was reflected in the discourse of that period, which was based on the perception that Britain's economy was in decline and that defence exports could provide one means of alleviating problems such as unemployment in specific industries. It was also suggested that the government constructed the identities of the GCC States as natural markets for British exports thereby providing a rationale for Britain's military presence in the region, and highlighting the mutual constitutions between the threats constructed by the government as its perceived interests in the region. The purpose of this chapter has been to continue discursive analysis based upon such constructivist principles and to consider the relevant factors within Thatcherite discourse during the period 1989-July 1990.

This chapter has shown that economic factors continued to feature prominently in the discourse during this period and it appears, therefore, that the government

continued in its active support for the export of British defence and other products to the GCC States whose identity as markets continued into this period. Discursive analysis has shown, for instance, the importance attached to contracts such as *Al Yaamamah* and the British government's desire to build upon them. In this light successes such as *Al Yamamah 2* would seem to suggest that the Saudi market contributed significantly to the success of Britain's defence industry during this period.

The chapter has also briefly considered other issues which have demonstrated the continuing economic and strategic importance of the other GCC States. Brief examples of contracts and defence links with Qatar, the UAE and Oman have been provided. It has also been shown that apart from Saudi Arabia, Oman in particular featured prominently in Britain's security policy for the region. Secondments, close links with Sultan Qaboos, and naval exercises such as *Saif Sareea* not only demonstrated the strategic importance of the Sultanate for Britain, but ensured that through defence links Britain was able to make a substantial contribution to the stability of the Straits of Hormuz.

Attention in the chapter then shifted to an analysis of the changes that occurred in British threat perceptions during this period and it was shown that although the impact of the end of the Cold War may have been greatest in the intra-European context, the process of change in the Soviet Union had global implications and the Gulf region was certainly affected. President Gorbachev's decision to unilaterally reduce Soviet troops and armaments and the so-called "new thinking" in Soviet foreign policy led the Foreign Affairs Committee to conclude that there was a new mood of optimism in the Commons. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, in particular, contributed to the changing perceptions held by the British government. Whereas in 1979, in light of Mrs. Thatcher's staunchly anti-Communist stance, it had regarded the Soviet invasion as a threat to the surrounding region, this period saw a steady improvement in relations between Britain and the Soviet Union and between the West and the Soviet Union more generally.

The second factor which led to the altering of British threat perceptions was, as the chapter has shown, the end of the Iran-Iraq war. Here the Soviet Union's willingness to co-operate in easing the effect of the Gulf war and its subsequent role in bringing the conflict to an end confirmed for the Government the view that the Soviet threat to the region had reduced significantly. The War's end itself meant that the Government could now reduce its commitment in the Persian Gulf region. As chapter 2 showed, Iran in particular came to be regarded as more of a threat to the stability of the GCC States because of its reluctance to accept a ceasefire, but the stalemate which had ensued in

1988 had persuaded Iran to accept Iraq's offer of a cessation of hostilities and this in turn meant that the British Government withdrew certain elements of the Armilla Patrol.

Chapter 2 also highlighted the extent to which the fundamentalist threat from the revolutionary regime in Iran featured in the British Government's perceptions. The conclusions drawn in this chapter, however, are based upon the Government's reassessment that Iran had actually failed in its attempts to export the revolution to the GCC States, which meant that their pro-Western stance and regimes remained intact.

The British reappraisal in light of the improvement in the security environment of the Persian Gulf formed part of the wider defence priority restructuring which the end of the Cold War had brought about. Despite the reduction in global tensions, however, there is some evidence to suggest that, although there was potential for a very substantial reduction in defence expenditure as highlighted by the Options for Change debate, the Government concluded that Britain had wider defence interests and that these had to be considered in any restructuring of defence priorities.[71] The government's commitment to ensuring continued stability for British shipping and general security in the Gulf region was therefore confirmed by the continuing role that the Armilla Patrol played during this period. The Government had taken the decision to remain strong on the issue of defence in the region, particularly since there was no formal peace treaty between Iraq and Iran and there was evidence to suggest that Iran still sought to export its revolution to other states in the region.

In addition to the uncertainties which remained, the chapter has shown that the altered state of British threat perceptions vis-à-vis the Persian Gulf region came to include a range of other threats which developed significantly during this period. The debate over the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction intensified in the House of Commons in light of overwhelming evidence that Iraq, in particular, had used chemical weapons against both its own population and Iran during the War. Furthermore, the "War of the Cities" had raised the question of the proliferation of ballistic missiles and such concerns led to Britain participating actively in the establishment of the MTCR. The Government's declared policy was one of opposition to such proliferation and the chapter has presented evidence to suggest that British politicians were indeed concerned and that Iraq and Iran's demonstration of their ability to use such weapons had not escaped the Government's attention.

This chapter established the basis for the analysis which is conducted in chapter 4 by introducing some factors which seek to examine to what extent Iraq was perceived

as a threat. This included Saddam Hussein's attempts to lay claim to the status once enjoyed by Nasser, Iraq's attempts to secure access to the Persian Gulf, and Saddam Hussein's territorial ambitions, which are based on academic analysis, itself part of the relevant discourse and, therefore, not lightly dismissed. In addition to this Sir Boorman's revelations that the British intelligence community regarded the Iraqi threat as serious enough to necessitate briefing Mrs. Thatcher as well as Saudi officials should not be discounted. It is in this context, therefore, that Iraq's proliferation of WMD needs to be viewed, and the fact that it created uncertainty in a region that was already volatile may be regarded as a precursor to the forceful and unambiguous stance adopted by the British Government when Iraq finally invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Finally, there are specific questions relating to the hypothesis itself which need to be discussed briefly here. The central goal of the thesis is to determine the extent to which economic factors shaped or influenced British foreign policy towards the GCC States during the Thatcher era. In order to address this issue the central claim has been that since Thatcherism represented a belief system based upon economics and material interests, it provided the British government with a framework upon which it could base its foreign policy towards the GCC States. The previous two chapters have drawn upon constructivist methodology to analyse the discourse of the Thatcher era and in light of this there are a number of conclusions that can be drawn here. Constructivist emphasis on the ability of ideas to play a structural role has important implications for this thesis whereby Thatcherism has been shown to structure a foreign policy based upon economic interests towards the GCC States. Detailed examination of government discourse, namely, statements by key politicians in the Official Record and the media, Select Committee Reports, Command Papers and so on have shown that economic factors did indeed feature prominently in the periods covered by both chapters. In this context, therefore, it is possible to assert that the statement of hypothesis is valid given this emphasis on economic interests in government discourse.

However, having claimed this, it remains important not to dismiss constructivism's post-positivist emphasis whereby constitutive arguments, reflection ad the opinions of the observer take on added significance. In addition to this, alongside the prominence of economic interests the discourse has revealed possible alternative explanations of British policy which do not have their basis in economic factors. Sir Frank Cooper's comments in chapter 2 and the long established defence links with Oman dealt with in both chapters 2 and 3, for instance, have pointed towards the importance of

historical links with the GCC States which could explain British policy in part. Similarly, the discussion in chapter 2 of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq also highlights issues relating to the general stability of the region as opposed to economic interests.

The existence of such elements within the general discourse highlights the possibility that despite the prominence of economic factors and perceptions that Thatcherism played an ideational role whereby this belief system influenced foreign policy there remains some question over whether Britain's perceived economic interests in the GCC States could have shaped British foreign policy exclusively. The central purpose of chapter 4 will be to analyse Britain's role in the Gulf crisis following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and it will demonstrate that there were numerous factors, other than economic interests, which may have had a role to play in influencing British policy. In light of this another important question that needs to be addressed in the final conclusion is whether the identification of alternative explanations diminishes to any extent the importance of economic interests as a factor.

## Notes

1 Yates, I., 'Market forces and the defence industries', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.134, no.4, Winter 1989, p.58. Also see debate on exports in *Hansard*, vol.149, 'Exports' and 'Balance of trade', 15 March 1989, columns 399-402.

2 Statement by Alan Clark (the then Minister of State for Defence) in *Hansard*, vol.162, 'Defence exports', 28 November 1989, columns 575-576.

3 Yates., op.cit., p.62.

4 'Ministry of defence: support for defence exports', *Public Accounts Committee, Fortieth Report, Session 1988-1989*, 30 October 1989, p.v.

5 Ibid., p.vi.

6 One of the functions of DESO, for example, was the provision of an extensive information database on overseas defence markets and trends, and to quickly disseminate such relevant information to UK defence companies.

7 Statement by Sir Peter Levene (the then Chief of Defence Procurement), in 'Ministry of defence: support for defence exports', *Public Accounts Committee, Fortieth Report, Session 1988-1989*, 30 October 1989, *Minutes of Evidence*, 26 April 1989, pp.2-5.

8 Ibid., p.7.

9 McLain, Lynton, 'BAe opts for quicker returns', *The Financial Times*, 6 April 1987.

10 See statement by Alan Clarke (the then Minister of State for Defence) on the role of DESO in *Hansard*, vol.158, 'DESO', 24 October 1989, column 662-663.

11 Statement by Tim Sainsbury (the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement), in *Hansard*, vol.146, 'Defence products (sales), 7 February 1989, column 672.

Also see *Hansard*, vol.148, 'Defence exports', 7 March 1989, column 515. In addition see Sainsbury's statement in *Hansard*, vol.152, 'Exports', 9 May 1989, columns 419-420.

12 See statements by Waldegrave in *Hansard*, vol.150, 'Gulf States', 12 April 1989, column 561, and on relations with the EC see Chalker's statement in *Hansard*, vol.144, European Community – GCC', 11 January 1989, column 703.

13 Co-operation between Britain and the GCC States also extended to other fields such as countering terrorism, drugs, organised crime and police training, as was indicated during Douglas Hurd's trip to the region between 27 March and 3 April 1989. One consequence of the trip was that memoranda of understanding were signed covering co-operation in these fields. At the time Hurd was the Secretary of State for the Home Department and Lynda Chalker was Minister of State for the FCO. *Foreign Affairs Committee, Third Report, Session 1990-91, Examination of Witnesses*, 24 October 1990.

14 Cordesman, Anthony, H., 'The realities and unrealities of the Middle Eastern arms market', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.132, no.1, March 1987, p.47.

15 Curtis, Ian, 'Saudi Arabia's European connection', *Defense and Foreign Affairs*, January 1989, p.16.

16 Cornelius, Andrew, 'Saudis £15 billion air and ship export deal may be a record for Britain', *The Guardian*, 16 March 1989.

17 'Ignorance and misunderstanding: it can only get better', *Defense and Foreign Affairs*, January 1989, p.10.

18 'Saudi defence offset talks', *The Financial Times*, 31 January 1989. George Younger was the then Secretary of State for Defence. Also see Gilman, William, 'UK and Saudi Arabia discuss Al Yamamah economic offset programme', *Armed Forces Journal*, March 1989.

19 See statement by Tim Sainsbury (the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement), in *Hansard*, vol.151, 'Saudi Arabia', 28 April 1989, column 685.

20 'New collaborative projects proposed between UK and Saudis', *Ministry of Defence News Release, 54/89*, 31 July 1989. Also see the detailed answer by Alan Clark in *Hansard*, vol.157, 'Saudi offset committee', 27 July 1989, column 901; Mallet, Victor, 'MOD offers Saudis more investment proposals', *The Financial Times*, 31 July 1989; and 'Saudis considering £1 billion UK offset', *Flight International*, 8 November 1989.

21 White, David, 'BAe expands into new activities to keep Saudi arms deal rolling', *The Financial Times*, 18 January 1990.

22 Evans, Michael, 'British vie for tanks deal after Saudi rethink', *The Times*, 6 April 1990. For details on the US tank offer see 'Proposed sale of 315 tanks to Saudi Arabia outlined', *Defence Journal*, December 1989.

23 Evans, Michael, 'Minister rules out Westland rescue with extra orders', *The Times*, 27 June 1988.

24 White, David, 'Saudi Arabia plugs Westland's order gap', *The Financial Times*, 11 July 1988. Also see Adams, James, 'Westland in crisis again', *The Sunday Times*, 6 November 1988; Harvey, David, 'Are events finally going Westland's way', *Defence Business*, December 1988, p.34; 'Westland on the hover', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 10 February 1990, p.272; and White, David, 'Westland nearer winning Saudi helicopter deal', *The Financial Times*, 11 June 1990.

25 See *Hansard*, vol.155, 'Saudi Arabia', 19 June 1989, column 57.

26 See Harrison, Michael, 'UK aircraft industry secures $1.5 bn deals', *The Independent*, 29 March 1989; and 'Qatar: Westland Sea King fleet being updated', *Third World Defence*, December 1990.

27 Young, P.L., 'The Sultan of Oman's navy', *Navy International*, February 1989, p.56.

28 'Eagles of Oman', *Armed Forces*, March 1989, p.135.

29 Ibid., p.138.

30 'Oman shelves Tornado order', *The Financial Times*, 4 May 1989. Also see 'Oman increases defence budget', *Defence and Foreign Affairs Weekly*, 15-21 January 1990; Abrahams, Paul, 'BAe sells 16 Hawk aircraft to Oman', *The Financial Times*, 1 August 1990; and 'BAe Hawks replacing ageing Hunter fleet', *Third World Defence*, December 1990.

31 Both quotes from 'Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union', *Foreign Affairs Committee, First Report, Session 1988-89*, 21 March 1989, p.vii and p.xii respectively.

32 'The outlook for relations between the UK and the Soviet Union and the other countries of Eastern Europe', *Memorandum submitted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, EE15*, 23 November 1988, p.3.

33 See statements by Lynda Chalker (the then Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs), in *Hansard*, 'Foreign Affairs', vol.156, columns 1239-1241.

34 See statements by Douglas Hurd (the then Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs), in *Hansard*, vol.162, 'Foreign Affairs, European Community and defence', 24 November 1989, column 346.

35 See *Memorandum submitted by the Ministry of Defence*, June 1990, in 'Defence implications of recent events', *Defence Committee, Tenth Report, Session 1989-90*, 11 July 1990, p.96.

36 See statements by Tom King (the then Secretary of State for Defence) in *Minutes of Evidence, 28 March 1990, in Defence Committee, Tenth Report, Session 1989-90*, pp.8-9.

37 Statement by Tom King in *Hansard*, vol.174, 'Defence Estimates 1990', 18 June 1990, column 691.

38 'Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union', *Foreign Affairs Committee, First Report, Session 1988-89*, op.cit., p.xxviii.

39 'Recent developments in Soviet external policy', *Assembly of Western European Union, 33rd Ordinary Session, Document 1111*, 15 October 1987, pp.3-6.

40 Statements by Peter Blaker, *Foreign Affairs Committee, Fifth Report, Session 1979-80, Minutes of Evidence*, 26 March 1980, p.57.

41 *FCO Memorandum to the Foreign Affairs Committee, 23/79-80/FM*, 20 February 1980, p.3.

42 'Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union', *Foreign Affairs Committee, First Report, Session 1988-89*, op.cit., p.xiii.

43 'Europe and the aftermath of the war between Iran and Iraq', *Assembly of Western European Union, 34th Ordinary Session, Document 1162*, 10 November 1988, pp.3-5.

44 *Hansard*, vol.144, 'Armilla Patrol', 10 January 1989, column 531. See statement by Archie Hamilton (the then Minister of State for Defence for the Armed Forces.

45 'Islamic resurgence', *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Background Brief*, April 1990, p.3.

46 Statement by Archie Hamilton (the then Minister of State for the Armed Forces) in *Hansard*, vol.174, 'Defence estimates', 19 June 1990, column 810.

47 Statement by Tom King in *Hansard*, vol.174, 'Defence estimates', 18 June 1990, columns 695-696.

48 'Defence implications of recent events', *Defence Committee, Tenth Report, Session 1989-1990*, 11 July 1990, p.xv.

49 Ibid., p.xvii.

50 See statement by Tom King in *Minutes of Evidence, 28 March 1990, in Defence Committee, Tenth Report, Session 1989-90*, op.cit., p.4.

51 Statement by Tom King in *Hansard*, vol.174, Ibid., p.693.

52 Statements by Archie Hamilton in *Hansard*, vol.174, op.cit, p.810; and Archie Hamilton in *Hansard*, vol.176, 'Nuclear and chemical weapons', 17 July 1990, column 538 respectively.

[53] See for example, Karp, Aaron, *Ballistic missile proliferation: politics and techniques*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995.

[54] Matthews, Ron, 'Dangerous new twists in the Middle East arms race spiral', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.135, no.4, Winter 1990, pp.31-33.

[55] See Hansard, vol.139, 'Missile Technology Control Regime', 28 October 1988, column 452. Also see Karp, Aaron, 'Ballistic Missile Proliferation in the third world', *Sipri Yearbook 1989*.

[56] Statement by George Younger (the then Secretary of State for Defence) in 'Statement on the defence estimates 1989', *Defence Committee, Fourth Report, Session 1988-89*, p.17.

[57] Navias, Martin, 'Is there an emerging Third World ballistic missile threat to Europe?', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.135, no.4, Winter 1990, p.12.

[58] Karp, Aaron, 'Ballistic missile proliferation', *Sipri Yearbook 1990*, p.369.

[59] See Lennox, Duncan (ed.), *Jane's strategic weapons systems Issue 10*, Jane's Information Group, Surrey, 1990. Also see the *Military Balances* of 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91. Also see *Hansard*, vol.174, 'Iraq (missiles)', 12 June 1990, column 138.

[60] George, Alan and Egozi Arie, 'Concern over Argentinean nuclear missile link with Iraq', *Flight International*, 15 April 1989, p.19.

[61] Timmerman, Kenneth R, *The Death Lobby: How the West armed Iraq*, London, Bantan Books, 1992, p.492. Also see Waldegrave's statement in *Hansard*, vol.171, 'Iraq', 27 April 1990, column 370. This shows that the nuclear capacitors bound for Iraq were seized at Heathrow as a result of co-operation between the US and the UK over a period of several months. For the Government's reaction to the Iraqi execution of Farzad Bazoft see *Hansard*, vol.169, 'Farzad Bazoft (execution)', 15 March 1990, column 667-669.

[62] Statement by Douglas Hurd in *Hansard*, vol.170, 'Nuclear trigger devices (Iraq)', 29 March 1990, column 671.

[63] There is a lot of evidence to support the fact that the British Government was aware that Iraq had used chemical weapons during its war with Iran. See for example Tim Renton's statement (the then Minister for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) in *Hansard*, vol.94, 'Iran-Iraq war', 20 March 1986, column 260. Geoffrey Howe's statement in *Hansard*, vol.57, 'Chemical weapons: Iran-Iraq war', 4 April 1984, column 579. *Hansard*, vol.58, 'Gulf War', 10 April 1984, column 190. *Hansard*, vol.105, 'Chemical weapons', 18 November 1986, columns 144-145. *Hansard*, vol.121, 'Iraq (chemical weapons)', 28 October 1987, column 265. *Hansard*, vol.129, 'Iraq', 14 march 1988, column 416. *Hansard*, vol.130, 'Iran-Iraq war', 20 March 1988, column 1066. *Hansard*, vol.132, 'Gulf war (chemical weapons), 4 May 1988, column 463 and *Hansard*, vol.139, 'Chemical weapons', 27 October 1988, column 410.

[64] McKnight, Sean, 'Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Army', in *The Gulf War Assessed* edited by J. Pimlott and S. Badsey, London, Arms and Armour Press, 1992, p.25.

[65] Zabih, Sepehr, *The Iranian Military in Revolution and War*, London, Routledge, 1988, pp.166.

[66] Bulloch, John and Morris, Harvey, *Saddam's War: The Origins of the Kuwait conflict and the International Response*, London, Faber and Faber Limited, 1991, p.76.

[67] Henderson, Simon, *Instant Empire: Saddam Hussein's Ambition for Iraq*, California (USA), Mercury House, 1991, p.117.

[68] *Personal interview with Sir Derek Boorman.* Sir Derek Boorman was connected with the Director of Military Operations between 1980 – 82, and subsequently served as Chief of Defence Intelligence and Deputy Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) from 1985 – 88.

[69] Idem.

[70] See Archie Hamilton's statements in *Hansard*, vol.147, 'Armilla Patrol', 20 February 1989, column 442; *Hansard*, vol.150, 'Gulf operation', 11 April 1989, columns 721-722; and *Hansard*, vol.157, 'Armilla Patrol', 18 July 1990, column 72. Also see statement by William

Waldegrave (the then Minister in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) in *Hansard*, vol.144, 'Persian Gulf (Royal Navy presence)', 19 December 1988, column 78. Also

[71] See statement by Tom King in *Minutes of evidence, 28 March 1990,* in Defence Committee, 10th Report, Session 1989-90, op.cit., p.4.

## Chapter 4: British Involvement in the 1990/91 Gulf War

### Introduction

The purpose of the previous two chapters has been to identify key factors relevant for the testing of the hypothesis established in chapter 1. The analysis of Thatcherite discourse in both periods has revealed that key elements within British industry and government regarded the Persian Gulf region as important for the purpose of exporting defence and civilian products. Chapter 1 established that Thatcherism could be seen as a belief system based upon economics and interests and that this provided a framework for foreign policy towards the region. In accordance with constructivist principles that identities and interests are socially created and consequently endogenous to the foreign policy process, it is possible to assert that economics did indeed influenced British foreign policy towards the GCC States. However, constructivist analysis of Thatcherite discourse has also revealed the existence of alternative explanations.

In an attempt to identify issues relating to the hypothesis, discursive analysis in Chapter 2 showed Persian Gulf oil and markets to be of interest to the British government and key industry. This analysis not only showed that the British government considered the region to be of some importance but also indicated that it was concerned with specific factors which were destabilising the region, namely, political changes, conflict and Soviet encirclement of the region, all of which were seen as potential threats. Chapter 3 continued to analyse Thatcherite discourse in an attempt to consider the extent to which economic interests played a role in influencing British policy, and further demonstrated that, between 1988 and the start of the Gulf War, British decision-makers were faced with the rapid passing away of an old order and the emergence of a number of other concerns. The conflict between Iran and Iraq, concern over the export of Islamic ideology to the politically fragile Gulf States, and the possibility of Soviet encirclement of the region began to give way to concerns such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Although this was perceived as a general problem amongst Third World countries, it was seen to have important implications for the Gulf region.

The main question being addressed in this thesis is whether Thatcherite discourse has revealed sufficient evidence to support the hypothesis. Although this issue will be dealt with in greater detail in the conclusion, it is possible to claim here

that analysis of the discourse has suggested, despite an emphasis on economic factors, that alternative explanations can be identified. This claim is particularly relevant to this chapter, as an analysis of Britain's role in the second Gulf War (GW2) highlights the possibility of multiple sources for policy. Working within established parameters, this chapter centres on six main points. Following a brief historical account of pre-war issues, the chapter will give an account of Britain's role in crisis diplomacy, where it will be shown that Britain's clear understanding of the problems created by the Iraqi invasion meant that it was able to offer an unambiguous view of how the crisis should be handled. Britain's unswerving commitment to achieving Iraq's total and unconditional withdrawal from an important GCC State also meant that it was able to offer the United States diplomatic support through the United Nations in the midst of a disparate international coalition which, though adamant over an Iraqi withdrawal, began to waver in its perceptions on how this should be achieved.

Britain's resolute diplomatic role was matched by its military support for the international coalition. In line with its diplomatic stance, the build-up of British forces in the Gulf States and a further enhancement of the long-established Armilla Patrol (in the Persian Gulf since 1980: see chapters 2 and 3) was almost immediate. Within a week of the invasion, the deployment of Tri-Service personnel and equipment had begun, and by January 1991, the British military presence in the GCC States (particularly in Saudi Arabia) was significant by any standards, amounting to over 45,000 personnel. Indeed, Operation Granby was the 'most comprehensive deployment of UK forces outside NATO since the end of the Second World War'.[1]

In addition to this, in the face of overwhelming evidence that Iraq was attempting to obtain and develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the British Government (even before the start of hostilities) recognised that, even after an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, further steps would need to be taken to ensure that a re-militarised Iraq would not pose a threat to the GCC States in future.[2] Such sentiments amongst highly placed British politicians contributed to Britain's leading role in the adoption of Security Council Resolution (SCR) 687, which demanded (amongst other things) that Iraq accept the elimination of all its weapons of mass destruction. The subsequent establishment of the United Nations Special Commission and an ongoing monitoring and verification process of Iraq's industrial and military capacity ensured a continuing British role in the region long after the cessation of hostilities.

Further justification for Britain's role during GW2 is provided by an analysis of the residual effects of the conflict. Not only did the war give the British defence industry an opportunity to demonstrate its hardware to an already important defence market, but the industry also undoubtedly benefited in terms of increasing its exports to the GCC States. Following the signing of the cease-fire, these States rapidly turned their attention to reconstruction (in the case of Kuwait) and the building up of their defence systems with the help of Western arms suppliers. This ensured that the reputation of the GCC States as lucrative defence markets (as established in chapter 2) continued into this period of analysis. This chapter will show, therefore, that though it is possible to assert that British policy towards the GCC States was shaped by multiple factors, economic interests continued to feature within the relevant discourse.

**Section 1: Historical Account**

The intention here is to concentrate on the role of British diplomatic moves in condemning and isolating Iraq in the international arena. This will establish the basis upon which a discussion of Britain's military presence in the Gulf region and its role during the war can be further developed. An important question that must be addressed before proceeding with further analysis is why Britain failed to see the signs of Iraq's invasion despite its long imperial history and subsequent association with the region. Britain had, after all, protected Kuwait once before in 1961 from an imminent Iraqi invasion.[3] The invasion of Kuwait in 1990 took Britain by surprise, however. Prime Minister Thatcher was in the US, the British Ambassador to Iraq was not in Baghdad at the time, and as a result, signs of Iraq's increasingly belligerent stance were not heralded as anything out of the ordinary. Even the movement of Iraqi troops towards Kuwait in July 1990 was a repetition of past actions when Iraq had felt that it needed to apply pressure on its neighbours. In August 1990 the military build-up was described as 'muscle-flexing and scare-mongering' in the press, and although the possibility of invasion had not been ruled out, there seemed to be a general view that this would be merely a limited incursion across the border and not a full-scale invasion.[4]

By the Foreign Office's own admission, Iraq's anger was directed primarily at Kuwait's (and the UAE's) breaking of OPEC oil quotas, which had forced the price of oil down. Iraq's initial demand therefore was that those two Gulf States should cut oil

production in order to raise the price. During the eight years of the Iran-Iraq war, Kuwait had supported Iraq financially. At the end of the war it saw an opportunity for economic expansion, and therefore, at the OPEC summit of 1989, negotiated an increase in its quota of oil production.[5] Many OPEC leaders disapproved of this action, but the least happy was Saddam Hussein. Since the cease-fire in 1988, Baghdad's top priority had appeared to be a revival of Iraq's economy, which was crucial to the survival of Saddam Hussein and his regime. As an oil producer, Iraq's hopes lay with the possible increase in the price of oil but with Kuwait (and the UAE) exceeding the quota this was impossible. Therefore, most of Iraq's diplomatic efforts until 1990 revolved around attempts to increase the price of oil, and pre-invasion negotiations between Iraq and other Arab States did finally lead to a Kuwaiti agreement to cut production to the OPEC quota of 1.5 million BPD.[6] As detailed in chapter 3, debt problems and Iraqi access to the Kuwaiti islands of Bubiyan and Warbah appeared to be the former's other grievances, but these complaints failed to hint at Iraq's claims to Kuwait's very existence.[7]

Similar views were expressed by Group Captain A.P.N. Lambert during a personal interview when he stated that, although there was increasing concern during July 1990 it was

> ... tempered I think by a belief that he was unlikely to do anything – and this was maybe because of the Mubarak shuttle diplomacy that took place – and so there was a belief that this was all sabre rattling – and so therefore it was not an area we were likely to become involved. Actually throughout June we were far more interested in the events of 1989 – with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the way in which NATO itself would develop ...[8]

**Section 2: Britain's Diplomatic Role in the Gulf Crisis 1990/91**

As the discourse demonstrates Britain's diplomatic (and ultimately military) contribution was significant. Official statements in Parliament, answers to the Select Committees, and United Nations Security Council (UNSC) documents not only reveal an unambiguous British stand over the Iraqi invasion, but appear to provide an indication that the British government was concerned that the region should remain stable.[9] In order to gain a clear understanding of Britain's diplomatic stance, a number of inter-related factors have to be considered. Firstly, the reasons behind Britain's attempts to resolve the crisis must be analysed, as they provide clues to Britain's high

profile diplomatic involvement. Secondly, given the contention that Britain's diplomatic stance was unswerving, what evidence is available to support this argument? Factors to be considered will include the role played by cross-party support in Britain's involvement and the importance of supporting the American position, as this was also an opportunity to emphasise the special relationship that existed between London and Washington. A further consideration will be to what extent the British stance was a means of acknowledging the importance of the Gulf and other key Arab States in maintaining the international coalition against Iraq. Finally, in light of certain international and national attitudes towards the maintenance of sanctions as opposed to the early use of military force, how did Britain overcome opposition to its contentious actions?

## Section 2.1 – Reasons for British involvement

Keohane provides a useful list of reasons behind Britain's involvement in the Gulf crisis. Thatcher's bleak image of international politics, to which Iraq's invasion of Kuwait conformed, enabled her to play her 'warrior leader' role and demonstrate that Britain, despite being relegated to a power of the second rank, was still able to play an important international role.[10] This thesis has also stressed the point that since the advent of the Thatcher Administration British foreign policy towards the GCC States had been accorded greater importance as confirmed by both Lord Douglas Hurd and Sir Alan Munro. It was reasonable to expect, therefore, since Britain had played an increasingly important role in the Gulf during the 1980s, that it would seek to play a central role in the latest crisis, and Mrs. Thatcher's influence in this should not be underestimated. As Group Captain Lambert stated, 'I think also you will find at the time that Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher did see things more in terms of black and white – I suspect that other Prime Ministers would not have been so adamant – they may have gone more for the flag waving ... I think her personality was very important'.[11]

Keohane also refers to Britain's concern that, if allowed to retain control of Kuwait, Iraq would be able not only to control decisions on oil pricing and production but also to create uncertainty in what were important British markets. Chapter 2 of this thesis analysed Britain's continuing reliance on Middle Eastern crude during the 1980s, and the region's importance to Britain in terms of oil continued into this

period, as is confirmed by a Foreign Office memorandum.[12] In addition, Britain's concerns over allowing Iraq to retain control of Kuwait were aptly summarised by Sir Anthony Parsons in an article in *The Times*, in which he stated:

> If he does get away with it he will have achieved many things ... he will have control of Kuwait's rich oil resources and enormous financial investments. He will be able to open up an alternate route to the Gulf, by-passing the *Shatt-al Arab* waterway and rendering irrelevant the vexed question of whether it should be controlled by Iran or Iraq. The remaining States of the peninsula will increasingly fall under Saddam Hussein's control ... it would be a great mistake to underestimate his ambition to lead the Arab world.[13]

Similarly Group Captain Lambert highlighted Britain's concerns as follows:

> ...there was certainly a popular perception that Saddam Hussein was becoming a bit of an adventurist – I mean the need to build up things like the super-gun, the need to have built up his forces to the level he had, some of his air bases were three times the size of Heathrow, he was building up a big military capability and it started to look, with the ending of the Iran-Iraq war, that he didn't actually need to have these things. The picture then starts to become clearer when you start thinking that he does see Iraq as a regional power and himself as a man with aspirations and ambitions.[14]

Furthermore, although Britain's military role in the crisis will be analysed later, it is relevant to state here that the region's strategic importance also stemmed from the fact that it was located on the southern flank of NATO. This highlights the possibility that a crisis in the Gulf region could have had destabilising effects on southern NATO States. Chapters 2 and 3 have already dealt with the importance that Britain placed on its out-of-area role during the 1980s, and this is confirmed by the government's expenditure plans (1991/92 to 1993/94), which stressed that '... defence planning must take account of continuing uncertainties, such as the potential danger arising from instability in the Soviet Union and the need to respond, perhaps at short notice, to threats to UK interests outside the NATO area'.[15] In light of this the government's response to the Iraqi invasion seems to suggest that it believed British interests in the region were at stake.

In addition to this, Britain felt it had a commitment towards the Gulf States, as it maintained Treaties of Friendship with some of them, and had close defence arrangements with others (see Appendix 1). As Group Captain Lambert stated:

> There was no chance that Britain was going to overlook the invasion of Kuwait because of our long-term ties with them – the treaties and so

> forth. We had a treaty with them which had lapsed so we had no guaranteed requirement to reinforce them but we felt that there was something we owed to the Kuwaitis in the sense that it was unthinkable to desert them.[16]

The importance of the Gulf States extended further than merely to Britain however. Britain's partners in the European Community (EC), for example, also viewed them as increasingly important, as was indicated by the ongoing negotiations between the EC and the GCC over the establishment of a free-trade agreement.[17] A meeting between the GCC and the EC held in March 1990 had discussed the implementation of the EC/GCC first-stage agreement and had subsequently encouraged further negotiations for the second-stage. The importance to British industry of these negotiations was indicated by Waldegrave who stated at the time, '... We have consulted widely with United Kingdom industries interested in these negotiations and believe that the Commission's negotiating mandate takes into account essential United Kingdom interests'.[18]

### Section 2.2 – Britain's unambiguous diplomacy

Freedman and Karsh are of the opinion that Saddam Hussein did not intend to annex Kuwait, but wished rather to establish hegemony over the Emirate in order to ensure its complete financial, political and strategic subservience to his wishes. Such a situation, they argue, would have provided him with Kuwait's financial and other resources 'without incurring the attendant risks of outright annexation'.[19] Whatever Saddam Hussein's motives, he remained in Kuwait, though he failed, in the face of a resilient Kuwaiti population, to persuade the international community that the Iraqi invasion had been in response to an indigenous uprising against the ruling Al-Sabah dynasty. With few exceptions the international community's reaction was one of outright condemnation.

Undoubtedly, the level of the American reaction and the favourable environment vis-à-vis relations between East and West contributed much to the international response. However, not only is there an important gap in the literature with regard to Britain's contribution to post-invasion diplomacy, but also an analysis of Britain's diplomatic role is a necessary pre-requisite for assessing the degree of

Britain's military contribution, and ultimately its presence in the region during this period.

The international response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait is well documented and so the intention here is not to repeat past, established analysis, but rather to concentrate specifically on Britain's role.[20] In order to do this, a number of issues have to be considered: first, Britain decided that Iraq had to be told it had no option but to withdraw; second, with the end of the Cold War, it appeared that the United Nations had finally succeeded in presenting a unified front to the international community. Therefore, if the UN was to retain its new-found credibility under the new set of international rules, it had to be seen to succeed in its first test in the post-Cold War period, and as a permanent member of the Security Council Britain had a particular responsibility towards ensuring that success. Third, Britain was aware that the coalition, made up of European, Arab and other States, was constantly under pressure from a variety of ideas and opinions on how to persuade Saddam Hussein to leave Kuwait, and on numerous occasions it felt a need to contribute to the rejection of ideas which appeared to go against the objectives laid out in the UN resolutions. The fourth issue was the important question of sanctions versus the early use of military force and, finally, Britain played a significant role in the adoption of various important resolutions, including SCR 687. Section C of this particular resolution imposed on Iraq the obligation of destroying and allowing international agencies to destroy its weapons of mass destruction, including ballistic missiles, nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

*No option but to withdraw*

The Prime Minister's opening statement during the 6 September debate on the invasion is typical of her response to the crisis. Here she set the tone for the unambiguous approach of subsequent months, which may have supported the coalition at times when it might have succumbed to weakness and indecision. She referred to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, '...a peaceful, independent country and a member of the United Nations since 1963 [as] a flagrant and blatant case of aggression'.[21] This statement highlighted the fact that the British Government's attitude towards the invasion was that Iraq had to withdraw unconditionally, and as the crisis progressed, it became clear that there would be no compromise on this principle.

However, there remained some question over whether the remainder of the international community would be as forceful. In this sense the British viewed themselves as occupying what Keohane refers to as the 'key point of contact between many of the principle actors in the crisis'.[22] In an attempt to ensure that the international community followed the principles laid out in the various resolutions, Britain first decided to work closely with its ally, the United States, since isolating Iraq would not be possible without full US co-operation. Secondly, since the opposition to Saddam Hussein was made up of so many disparate nations, the chances of one or more States offering Saddam a face-saving option increased. It was crucial, therefore, that the isolation and condemnation of Iraq should appear to be the result of a collective will rather than of one or two powerful States steam-rollering the rest along.

On the first point, Mrs Thatcher had no cause for concern, since it soon became clear that Britain and the United States had adopted identical views over the invasion. During the Security Council's first debate on the crisis the US Representative (Thomas Pickering) strongly condemned the invasion and called for Iraq's immediate and unconditional withdrawal. Sir Crispin Tickell (the then British Representative to the Security Council) similarly condemned the invasion calling it an 'ugly moment in world affairs' and 'a clear breach of the Charter of the United Nations'.[23] The fact that the meeting resulted in the adoption of SCR 660, with 14 out of the 15 Members voting in favour, showed that the process of collectively isolating Iraq had begun.

The second aspect to Britain's policy, that of presenting a collective will behind international pronouncements of condemnation, was also forcefully put forward by Sir Crispin Tickell: 'The Security Council represents a focus of world opinion. It is the way in which the international community can mobilise itself to maintain the purposes and ideals of the Charter ...'[24] Following Iraq's failure to abide by the demands of SCR 660, a further Security Council meeting, held on 6 August 1990, adopted SCR 661, which imposed mandatory sanctions against the aggressor. At this meeting Sir Crispin Tickell once again took the opportunity to stress the importance of collective action: 'Today the Security Council faces its responsibilities. It must succeed this time where the League of Nations failed and where itself has faltered in the past ...'[25]

Mrs. Thatcher, at the time on a visit to the US, also condemned the invasion calling the 'Iraqi violation of the territory of a full UN member [as] totally unacceptable', but highlighted the need for increased international co-operation in a world of declining superpower influence. During this trip she emphasised that the international community could do nothing individually. There had to be the 'collective will to see that this Security Council resolution [660] against Iraq is upheld ... We are prepared to support those measures which collectively we can agree to, and collectively we can make effective'.[26] Furthermore, in the House of Commons Mrs. Thatcher stated that 'Iraq's actions raise very important issues of principle as well as of law. There can be no conceivable justification for one country to march in and seize another ... If Iraq's aggression were allowed to succeed, no small state could ever feel safe again ... The issue is one of importance to the whole world. It affects world security, world oil supplies and world economic stability', thereby stressing the multilateral nature of the crisis.[27]

In light of the perception, apparent in the discourse, that the Thatcher Administration viewed economic interests in the GCC States as important, the desirable outcome from a British perspective was that Iraq should withdraw from Kuwait. However, there is doubt, in the face of dwindling resources and Arab and domestic opposition, whether Britain would have had the will or the capacity to take action (specifically military action) alone. Furthermore, in light of its defence treaties with four other Gulf Emirates and a co-operation agreement with Jordan, Britain clearly had 'an interest in putting guarantees of territorial integrity against Iraq on a multilateral basis'.[28]

Even though the coalition arranged against Iraq was made up of many States, it must be remembered that only a handful actually conducted military operations. Many important States such as Germany and Japan did not contribute military forces, whereas other Muslim nations such as Pakistan and Bangladesh were on orders not to attack Iraq but merely to defend the Islamic Holy sites in Saudi Arabia. This caused a degree of concern over the coalition's durability. In its role as 'point of contact' Britain saw itself as not only co-operating with the members of the coalition, and the US in particular, but also as ensuring that other important States, particularly Arab States of the coalition and the Gulf States themselves, continued to support the coalition. This was of particular concern when Saddam Hussein, by firing Scud missiles on Israel, tried to put pressure on the Arab members of the coalition by

claiming that he was upholding the rights of the Palestinians. The integrity of the coalition, therefore, remained one of Britain's main concerns throughout the pre-war months. For this reason various Government officials, including the Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, Defence Minister Alan Clark and Defence Secretary Tom King visited the region at different times during August and September 1990.

The weak link in the coalition appeared to be the Arab members. Saudi Arabia was nervous that Iraqi troops had massed on its borders, Bahrain was well aware that it had been on Saddam Hussein's list of States breaking oil quotas, and the other Gulf States knew of Iraq's military exploits. Incurring Saddam's wrath could have subjected them to the same fate as that of Kuwait. There was particular concern therefore that the Arab States would split into two camps over the issue of whether or not to allow foreign intervention in Arab affairs. The Gulf States, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, especially, were aware that they would need Western protection and therefore asked for help. Other members of the Arab League, however, remained cautious. For instance, although members of the Arab League condemned the invasion and called for an Iraqi withdrawal during the first subsequent meeting, the resolution adopted '...reject[ed] strenuously any foreign intervention or attempt at intervention in Arab affairs'.[29] A subsequent GCC Ministerial meeting, however, while also condemning Iraq for its violation of international law, made no mention of opposing foreign intervention in the region. This was undoubtedly due to the GCC's recognition that some form of international, specifically Western, intervention would be necessary.[30]

Two Arab States, Syria and Egypt, who were not members of the GCC were crucial in the success of the coalition. They issued statements on 11 January 1991 indicating their support both for the coalition and for international resolutions condemning Iraq and calling for its withdrawal from Kuwaiti territory. Their support, Syria as Iraq's neighbour and rival for Ba'athist leadership, and Egypt as a voice of moderation in an otherwise volatile region, was necessary if the coalition was to retain a degree of legitimacy amongst other Arab States.[31]

Further evidence that the Gulf States themselves were looking to the West for protection against the possibility of further Iraqi incursions is provided in statements by British politicians. For example, on 6 September 1990 the Prime Minister stated, '... in response to requests from King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf rulers, the United States, closely followed by Britain, immediately deployed ground, air, and naval forces to deter further aggression by Saddam Hussein'.[32] Saddam Hussein's

attempts to deflect Arab opinion by linking his invasion of Kuwait to the Palestinian issue was also of concern to Britain and other Western members of the coalition. Douglas Hurd confirmed that British diplomacy was concerned with attempting to ensure that the main Arab States remained supportive of the UN resolutions and did not split the coalition when he stated, '...it is clear from all the information which we have from the Arab Leaders, the main Arab States of the coalition against Saddam Hussein, that they do not intend to be deflected by the Palestinian issue from their stance and I believe that will continue'.[33]

The other important factor with regard to the collective will and international unanimity was the position of the Soviet Union. One of the factors which meant that this crisis could be treated differently from other crises during the Cold War era was a significant degree of co-operation between the superpowers, and this was reflected in the unprecedented speed with which the Security Council was able to adopt resolutions.

The discourse at this point highlights how British threat perceptions were changing. In 1979, as shown in Chapter 2, it had appeared, for a time, that with the Soviet Union now within striking distance of the British (and Western) oil and trade routes, Iran purporting to spread its Revolution throughout the Gulf region, and conflict in danger of spilling over into the fragile GCC States, British policy-makers felt they had to continue to demonstrate British interests in preserving stability. The chapter ended, however, with an identification of factors which would have led to British policy-makers reassessing their perceived notions of threats to the region, and Chapter 3 developed those changing perceptions and identified the emergence of possible new threats. The end of the Iran-Iraq War, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and an emerging belief that Iran was not able to export its revolution gave credence to the argument that the threat environment had altered.

The international response to Iraq's invasion seemed to reflect this change, as the end of the Cold War and the Soviet Union's increased willingness to co-operate with the West had provided a basis upon which the Security Council could now operate. This was also to contribute to Britain's perceptions of the changing structure of the threats facing its interests in the Persian Gulf. Chapter 3 dealt with the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the end of the Cold War and the subsequent implications for British policy in the Gulf. Analysing the general causes and effects of the events in Eastern Europe and the end of the Cold War, however, is beyond the

remit of this thesis. Nevertheless, it is useful to briefly consider some aspects in that they further clarify how far Britain perceived the change in threats.

A *Defence Committee Report*, published in July 1990, referred to the events in Eastern Europe as having 'profound and far-reaching implications for British defence policy'. The unification of Germany, the withdrawal of the German Democratic Republic from the Warsaw Pact, the emergence of democratically elected Governments in Eastern Europe, and the progress of the conventional arms control talks in Vienna contributed to the belief in Britain that 'as a military alliance, the Warsaw Pact [was] effectively defunct'.[34] The report went on to state that 'The collapse of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation as a military alliance [meant] that even the technical possibility of the Soviet Union mounting a surprise attack, rapidly reinforced, on the Central Front [had] virtually disappeared'.[35] Furthermore Waldegrave, in a statement to the House on 11 July 1990, commented on the new state of relations between Britain and the Soviet Union: 'Anglo-Soviet relations are better than ever. We are moving steadily from an era of confrontation to one of co-operation in an increasingly broad range of areas'.[36]

The CSCE Summit held in Paris from 19-21 November also resulted in a considerable improvement in relations between East and West. As Mrs. Thatcher stated, 'The word historic tends to be used extravagantly these days, but I believe that this Summit was an historic gathering. It marked the end of the Cold War in Europe and the triumph of democracy, freedom and the rule of law'. The CFE Treaty was also signed at this time, and was heralded as a major achievement in that it '...require[d] the countries of the Warsaw Pact, and in particular the Soviet Union, to make massive reductions in the numbers of their tanks, artillery, armoured vehicles, helicopters and aircraft. The overhang of vastly superior numbers of Warsaw Pact forces, which ha[d] for so long been a threat to Western Europe, [were to] be eliminated'.[37]

It would be a mistake to regard such events as being important purely from a European perspective. Not only did the improvement of relations between East and West lower tensions in Europe, it also had a significant effect worldwide. One such consequence was that Britain was now able to shift even more of its attention to the Gulf region, where it ultimately contributed over 45,000 personnel in support of coalition efforts (see Section 4.2). Furthermore, another effect of improved East-West

relations was that they led to the United Nations' decision-making structures being significantly strengthened, and attention now turns to this aspect.

*A strengthened UN*

The wider implications of the end of the Cold War must not be ignored. As Waldegrave clarified, relations between East and West were moving towards an era of '...co-operation in an increasingly broad range of areas'.[38] One such area which had specific implications for British policy in the Persian Gulf was the increase in levels of co-operation within the Security Council. The following statement by Mrs. Thatcher shows how important British politicians considered the Security Council's effective handling of the crisis to be.

> At last we are seeing the United Nations act with the determination and purpose that its founders envisaged ... I would make particular mention of the part played by the five permanent members ... They have worked together to an unprecedented degree to ensure that United Nations action is effective. I believe that in this we are seeing the first results of post-Cold War diplomacy: confrontation has been replaced by a new atmosphere of co-operation. We would never have succeeded in getting this response three or four years ago ...[39]

Soviet co-operation within the Security Council certainly appeared to be forthcoming, as the following quote by the Soviet Representative to the Security Council shows: 'The Soviet delegation believes that the Security Council must act immediately to eliminate this violation of international peace and security in a region where so many urgent conflicts still await solution. We support the draft resolution [and] expect immediate cessation of the armed invasion, the withdrawal of Iraqi troops and a renewal of negotiations between the countries ...'[40] Such Soviet statements regarding the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait were particularly welcome in Western capitals since Iraq had long been supported, in terms of defence equipment, by the Soviet Union, and there had been concern as to whether the Soviet Union would once again exercise its veto power in the Security Council. With the Soviet Union supporting the various draft resolutions it appeared, therefore, that the UN was finally fulfilling the role envisaged for it. As David Nicholls stated during a personal interview:

> [With] the end of the Cold War ... the West was more comfortable both with the idea of being able to use the United Nations, and the fact that the Cold War was not being pursued by all means, so that, in the case of the Middle East, you could argue that these events were natural precursors to a readiness to be involved in a just cause in which the

> United Nations now appeared to have a distinct role ... You could argue that ... the trigger for British support of a UN force in the Gulf ... was that it did find itself very much in tune with the harmony of the way the UN was developing.[41]

And, ...

> It has to be said that the military was also looking for a role – having lost some roles – NATO and all that – the British military, I think were really quite despondent during the period of Options for Change – and so this war came rather conveniently. That certainly, at the level of MOD activity, was very relevant. At the level of the Foreign Office I expect that you do need to look at the United Nations ... but it certainly does not undermine all the other things but it is another angle.[42]

In his conclusion Keohane stated '... the crisis provided Britain with the opportunity to play a central role in the revived United Nations, thereby strengthening her own position as a permanent member of the Security Council'.[43] This reference to the United Nations echoes the sentiments in David Nicholls' statement quoted above, where he refers to the importance of the UN at Foreign Office level.

Keohane's conclusions and David Nicholls' comments above go to the core of the thesis and demonstrate the importance of constructivism's discursive method. Though much of the discourse of the era has been concerned with economic interests in light of Thatcherite beliefs significant evidence is emerging which suggests that material interests were not the sole guide in the formation of British policy. It is more likely that the discourse of the era contained within it a multiple range of factors which taken together provide a more accurate picture of the process of policy-making. That is not to say, however, that the economic explanation can be dismissed or indeed its importance reduced.

*Pre-withdrawal compromises?*

Britain's insistence on a no-compromise stand over the issue of Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait features prominently in the discourse, and it may be supposed to have contributed to several significant developments, namely a strengthening of the so-called special relationship with the US. This was shown in the way that the US military structure succeeded in integrating elements of the British Armed Forces, and as will be shown in Section 4.3, only British commanders were allowed to sit in on the US military's decision-making meetings. Second, Britain's belief that Iraq had to be persuaded, and if need be, forced, to leave Kuwait, provided a high degree of

support to the US in that it kept other disparate members of the coalition from succeeding in their attempts to reach pre-withdrawal compromises with the Iraqi regime.

This element in British diplomacy contrasted strongly with certain other coalition members' perspectives. On numerous occasions throughout the crisis the British Government stated, both in the House of Commons and the Security Council, that the objectives of the Security Council resolutions were not negotiable. The said objectives were the unconditional withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwaiti territory (which came under threat on a number of occasions throughout the initial months of diplomacy), the restoration of the legitimate Government of Kuwait, and the restoration of peace and stability in the area.

Resolution 678 (adopted on 29 November 1990) specified that, in light of the failure of sanctions and Iraq's own intransigence in leaving Kuwait coalition members could now "use all necessary means" to secure the objectives of resolution 660, in other words to end the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. However, the Resolution also provided for a "grace period" (until 15 January 1991), in an effort to give Iraq one final chance to abide by the resolutions. Just prior to the deadline a last ditch attempt by the French Government called for Iraq to declare its 'intention to pull out of Kuwait according to a set timetable and to begin ... [immediately] with a rapid large-scale withdrawal'. The new British Prime Minister (John Major), however, stated that the British Government would not accept a watering down of the resolutions, and that neither could the Government be party to any extension of the deadline, as this would appear to reward Iraq for its aggression. He went on to state:

> We fully subscribe to the idea of a last appeal to Saddam Hussein ... We have no difficulty with that point. But we do have considerable difficulty with the French text. All along we have supported the Security Council resolutions and we must judge the French text by two criteria: whether it is wholly consistent with the ... resolutions and whether it is likely to lead Iraq to comply with those resolutions or simply have the effect of taking the pressure off Iraq at this very late stage. In our judgement it fails those tests and it is for that reason that ... we cannot accept and cannot support the particular position put forward by the French.[44]

This example shows that the coalition was not unanimous in its stand over how to deal with the Iraqi invasion, but it also shows the firm approach adopted by the British Government. Several questions arise here, namely, to what extent was Britain's

resolute support for the US considered invaluable? Did Britain's stance help maintain the support of other members of the coalition? In what way would events have unfolded differently had Britain not adopted this attitude, and ultimately, would the US have gone to war with Iraq without Britain's support?

The coalition may have been made up of 33 States, but Britain was one of a handful that provided military forces that took part in the actual war. Furthermore, much of Britain's shuttle diplomacy was conducted in States with whom it had close economic and historical ties, namely, the Gulf States. Its support for the US within the UN has been well documented here. Whether or not ultimately these actions influenced events is a matter for supposition, however, the central issue is the British perception of its own role and the conclusions that the observer can draw from the available research material. Constructivist analysis allows for the identification of alternative explanations, and in light of its emphasis on ideas and discourse it places the observer alongside other social factors at the forefront of analysis.

The air campaign against Iraq began on the night of the 15 January 1991 and lasted until 25 February 1991, following which the allies began conducting the ground offensive. However, even after a month of intensive allied air bombardment, Iraq did not appear to be willing to abide by the principles (as Britain understood them) of the resolutions. The announcement by the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council on 15 February 1991, for instance, indicated Iraq's readiness to deal with SCR 660, but stated that the question of an Iraqi withdrawal would have to be explicitly linked to a number of conditions.[45] The allies were to reject this immediately, and, as David Hannay (UK Representative to the Security Council) stated at the time,

> ... it is not the simple and unconditional affirmative on withdrawal that is needed if this conflict is to be ended. It does indeed contain one tiny gleam of light: the word "withdrawal" has at last re-entered the [Iraqi] vocabulary'. He then went on to state, 'However [it] is promptly obscured behind a huge bank of conditions ... that actually contradict any apparent willingness to accept [SCR] 660. That resolution calls for unconditional withdrawal. Acceptance of it is not, therefore, consistent with the posing of conditions.[46]

This sentiment was also voiced in the House of Commons by Douglas Hurd, who stated: 'It is clear that the Revolutionary Command Council's announcement does not commit Iraq to unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait, as required by the United Nations Security Council either in resolution 660 or in the later ones, nor to the

implementation of the other resolutions passed by the Security Council since 2 August'.[47]

One item on the list was of special interest in that it caused a significant degree of concern to the allies from the early stages of the conflict – the question of linking the Iraq/Kuwait and the Arab-Palestinian/Israeli issues. Although this point was mentioned earlier, it is particularly relevant in this context. The Arab/Israeli question was one of the instruments in Saddam Hussein's arsenal, and he made various attempts (such as firing Scud Missiles on Israel) to influence Arab public opinion. His motives became apparent on 12 August 1990 when he presented a three-point plan, the essence of which was to link a solution to the problem created by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait to all other outstanding Middle East problems. As a Foreign Office Briefing Note highlighted, this proposal referred to Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territory, Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, the replacement of Western forces in the region by an Arab force (excluding Egyptian troops) under the supervision of the UN Secretary-General, and the ending of all sanctions against Iraq. 'By trying to make the direct linkage between Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, Saddam clearly intended his initiative to serve the purpose of dividing Arab opinion from the broad international consensus'.[48] Had he succeeded in doing so, preserving the coalition with the important Arab members intact would have been much more difficult. Even though the British Government acknowledged that a conference dealing with the Palestinian problem was long overdue, it nevertheless categorically dismissed Iraq's attempts at linking the two issues. As Douglas Hurd stated:

> In Kuwait you have a very simple act of aggression ... and you have a simple response ... One Arab country has attacked another and must be forced to withdraw. The Arab-Israel problem is a much more complex situation with the Israelis occupying a number of lands which do not belong to Israel as a result of an attack not by, but on, Israel in the 1967 War which gave rise to the occupation. We are against the occupation ... it is in some respects unjustly conducted and ... it does not provide for any kind of recipe for stability ...[but] it is not the same situation and requires a different remedy ... It is perfectly true that ...[past] efforts ... have not proved successful ... the present American Administration is more active on this than any I can remember, and we will have to return to this, but it is not right to make just that very simple comparison between the two positions. The history ... is different.[49]

The Government did, however, as part of its ongoing diplomatic efforts seek assurances from Arab members of the coalition that they would not be swayed by Iraq's attempts to deflect Arab opinion. As Hurd further stated at the time:

> I was discussing this with Prince Saud, the Saudi Foreign Minister, who made the point ... that if the Arabs were to accept that kind of approach they would be settling for lower standards of international behaviour than the international community as a whole and that was something he did not think they should or could do. That is, I think, a very clear Saudi view, a very clear Gulf view, a very clear Egyptian view, and I have been able to confirm that from my own conversations. I do not think it is likely to go that way.[50]

Whatever the influence of British diplomacy, it did become clear that the main Arab members of the coalition, despite some dissension within their populations, would not be deflected by Saddam Hussein's attempts to split the states opposing him. This was confirmed in a Security Council Document where Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria 'expressed their condemnation of the Iraqi regime's attempts to take advantage of the question of Palestine in order to justify its subjugation of Kuwait'.[51]

*Sanctions or military force?*

Once it was deemed that Iraq would not immediately succumb to the imposition of comprehensive sanctions it became increasingly obvious to the British Government (and other coalition members) that military force would have to be an option. In order to assess why the British Government was so adamant in its decision not to rule out the use of force, a number of factors have to be considered. These include the issue of Iraq's own seemingly intransigent position. Throughout the months of diplomacy (2 August 1990 – 15 January 1991), Iraq gave no indication that it would be willing to withdraw from Kuwait. Also important was the question of why the British Government was not willing to give the sanctions longer time to work. Resolution 661, which imposed mandatory economic sanctions against Iraq, was adopted on 6 August 1990. Resolution 678, on the other hand, which was adopted a mere 2-and-a-half months later on 29 November 1990, specified that the coalition could use "all necessary means" to ensure the removal of Iraq from Kuwait. This hinted at a degree of impatience amongst leading members of the coalition (including Britain), and, therefore, brought forth much criticism nationally as well as from various members of the international community. Although force was not used by the coalition until 15

January 1991, this was actually a mere 5-and-a-half months after the invasion, and historical precedents showed that sanctions were generally applied for much longer.

The fact that Britain had to contend with a disparate national audience indicated that cross party support was not as unanimous as the Government may have claimed at the time. Opinions varied considerably between, on the one hand, the Thatcher (later Major) position that reflected a no compromise approach and held that the use of force was not to be ruled out, and a second group which sought to influence the Government to allow sanctions much longer to work before considering the use of force. A third group held the belief that force should not be used at all.

During the crisis the British Government confirmed that its own objectives were the same as those set out in the United Nations' resolutions; namely, Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait, and the restoration of the legitimate government of Kuwait.[52] The Government's resolve was clearly indicated by Douglas Hurd in the following quote: '...unconditional withdrawal means what it says. It does not mean an announcement as to withdrawal, then we negotiate. It means Iraqi withdrawal from the whole of Kuwait. That ... certainly is our position'.[53]

Initially, the hope was that sanctions would have an effect on Iraq and persuade Saddam Hussein to capitulate and withdraw from Kuwait. When resolution 661 was adopted there was a belief that Iraq would be vulnerable to the effects of sanctions, as its economy was almost totally dependent on the export of oil through a limited number of outlets. This explains why Britain regarded as critical the steps taken by Turkey and Saudi Arabia to prevent Iraq from exporting its oil through pipelines in their territory. Furthermore, as SCR 661 specified, the embargo extended to other outlets and it was believed that since Iraq had limited currency reserves following the Iran-Iraq War, and was dependent on the import of food and other important commodities, sanctions would work. In addition to this, the effects on the world economy appeared to have been minimised following co-operation amongst the GCC States to increase their oil production to compensate for the loss of Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil.[54]

The belief that the sanctions would prove effective against Iraq was further set out in a Foreign Office Briefing Note which pointed out that the development of a huge military capacity in Iraq meant that other forms of economic development had suffered considerably. The result of this was that Iraq had an economy '... which [was] highly dependent on imports of foreign supplies, services and replacement

parts. With all these supplies now unobtainable ... Iraq [was] increasingly subject to massive economic dislocation'.[55]

The sanctions regime against Iraq was further strengthened on 25 August 1990 with the adoption of SCR 665, where Britain played a central role by being one of the co-sponsors. This resolution called on Member States with maritime forces in the area to 'halt all inward and outward maritime shipping in order to inspect and verify their cargoes and destinations and to ensure strict implementation of the provisions related to such shipping laid down in resolution 661'.[56] In light of its presence in the Persian Gulf in the form of the Armilla Patrol, Britain was also to play a central role in the actual implementation of the resolution (see Section 4.3). The regime was later extended to include measures to tighten the air embargo through the adoption of SCR 670 on 25 September 1990.[57]

Resolution 665 was of particular importance in that it was adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and in essence authorised Member States to use force if necessary to ensure that the provisions of the resolution were upheld. As Pickering was to state in the Security Council, 'The authority granted in this resolution is sufficiently broad to use armed force ... depending upon the circumstances which might require it. This is a significant step. On only a few occasions in the past has this authority ever been exercised. This is therefore a historic and significant decision...'[58] At the same meeting Sir Crispin Tickell stated that the resolution had to be adopted because of mounting evidence of breaches of the sanctions: 'As we know for ourselves, there is a string of tankers carrying Iraqi oil from Iraqi ports outwards from the Persian Gulf. If these open acts of defiance succeed, the authority of the United Nations itself, will be gravely undermined'. At the same time, the British Representative clarified that the international community was reserving for itself the right to take other measures, if necessary, to force Iraq to withdraw: 'Let no-one, least of all the Government of Iraq, doubt our determination to see the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the restoration of the legitimate authority in that country'.[59]

That right was later exercised on 25 September 1990 when it was deemed necessary to extend the sanctions regime by tightening the air embargo. Resolution 670 was adopted following a Security Council meeting at which the Foreign Ministers of all five Permanent Members were present and at which Douglas Hurd once again stressed the importance of strengthening the effectiveness of the United Nations in

dealing with crises. 'Iraq's seizure of Kuwait faces this post-Cold War world with its first crucial test. So far the signs of the response are good ... The United States, the Soviet Union, China, Western and Eastern Europe, Japan, and a decisive majority of Arab and Muslim countries stand together in a unique collection to defeat aggression'.[60] (Appendices 6 and 7 give an account of some of the measures taken by the international community and Britain to impose sanctions on Iraq).

Even though Britain supported the adoption of resolutions imposing sanctions on Iraq, the perception that they were merely one aspect of a strategy for putting pressure on Iraq is strengthened by the fact that the government was unwilling to see them as a long term measure. In the event, sanctions were only given 5-and-a-half months before military action against Iraq commenced. Further factors in support of Britain's willingness to use force stemmed from the premise that Britain increasingly viewed Iraq's behaviour as abhorrent, and that various steps taken by the Iraqi regime contributed to the British view that sanctions would not have the desired effect. The promise that Iraq would not use military force during the negotiations, made by Saddam Hussein to President Mubarak, was broken shortly after on 2 August 1990. As the Prime Minister was to state at the time: 'Let us not forget that in Saddam Hussein we are dealing with a person who, without warning, has gone into the territory of another State against international law ... A person who will take such action against one State will take it against another, if he is not stopped and his invasion reversed'.[61]

Following the invasion the Iraqi authorities also formulated an official policy of destroying the very fabric of Kuwait. In a document published on 19 December 1990, Amnesty International was to confirm emerging accounts of systematic torture, murder and other abuses propagated against thousands of Kuwaiti citizens. The report went on to state that 'Iraq has conducted a campaign designed to end Kuwait's existence as an independent State, by changing her demographic structure ... destroying the country's infrastructure, industry, and public and private property...'[62] In addition, Hurd stated on 11 December 1990 that what was happening in Kuwait was no secret and that Saddam Hussein was out to eradicate Kuwait as an independent country. He went on to state that '... with each day that passes, the likelihood that we shall be able to restore Kuwait to its former position decreases'.[63]

The British Government not only viewed Iraq's obliteration of Kuwait and the treatment of its citizens with abhorrence, but also expressed concern about third state

nationals (including Westerners) caught in the crisis. The use of Western hostages as shields to protect 'strategic sites' in Iraq also resulted in immense public and international condemnation. Even as late as December 1990 there were still over 1,150 British citizens in Iraq and Kuwait, some of whom had been detained at various 'strategic sites' by Iraqi authorities.[64] By mid-December, however, it became apparent that Saddam Hussein had capitulated over the question of hostages and he subsequently allowed foreign nationals to leave Iraq and Kuwait. Although Douglas Hurd noted this as a welcome development, he confirmed that Iraq had not as yet complied with the two main requirements of the past resolutions: namely, the unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait and the restoration of its legitimate Government.[65]

By the end of October, there were clear signs that the British Government was beginning to believe that Saddam Hussein would not withdraw from Kuwait, despite the comprehensive sanctions. As Hurd was to state in the House on 24 October 1990: 'I believe that President Hussein will seek to cling to the country that he has acquired by force, or perhaps to negotiate his way out so that he can claim some gain for his aggression'.[66] The clearest indication that the British Government was preparing itself for the possibility of war came during the November (1990) 'Debate on the Address', when the Prime Minister stated:

> ... even though condemnation by the international community grows stronger, even though sanctions are steadily tightened and even though the people of Iraq are being subjected to unnecessary hardship to satisfy their dictator's lust for power and conquest, there is no sign that Saddam Hussein is prepared to relinquish his hold on Kuwait ... Time is running out for Saddam Hussein. The implacable message from the House must be [that] either he gets out of Kuwait soon, or we and our allies will remove him by force...'[67]

A week before this particular debate Sir David Hannay had presented a similar argument in the Security Council. The issues he raised revolved around (amongst others) continuing Iraqi reluctance to abide by the principles of the resolutions, gross human rights violations perpetuated by Iraqi troops in Kuwait and Iraq's continuing assertion that Kuwait was its nineteenth province and not a separate State.[68] Subsequently, the Security Council adopted resolution 678 on 29 November 1990 which allowed Members to use "all necessary means" to remove Iraq from Kuwait. Iraq's deadline to comply with the resolutions and withdraw from Kuwait was set for

15 January 1991, a month and a half later. This "grace period" was included in the resolution on Soviet insistence, with the intention of providing Saddam Hussein with one final chance to comply. It had been feared that the Soviet Union would veto the adoption of SCR 678, as Gorbachev had at the outset demanded more time for the sanctions to work. The Soviet Union shifted its stance, however, after a visit by Tariq Aziz (the Iraqi Foreign Minister) to Moscow on 26 November 1990, when he failed to show any sign of moderation.

Given that national opinion over the use of force varied widely, the Government sought to justify its own willingness to adopt this method by questioning whether sanctions, even if applied over a long period, would undermine Saddam Hussein's resolve to keep his hold on Kuwait. The arguments used by the Government revolved around Saddam Hussein's continuing belligerency and unwillingness to comply with SCR 660, and the threat to use force was seen as another means of applying pressure on Iraq. As Douglas Hurd stated in the House on 11 December 1990: 'We do not argue that in any blithe or careless manner. We prepare the military option because in sober judgement we see the experience of that option – the possibility of that option ... as the last and most powerful peaceful pressure on the aggressor ... The legal authority to use force has been there for some time and the political authority has now been given [SCR 678] ... That is the strongest possible expression of collective security'.[69]

The Government also claimed that, if Saddam Hussein was given longer to comply with the UN resolutions, it was likely that his armed forces would continue to take advantage of the time allowed to improve their military positions. The number of Iraqi troops in Kuwait now numbered nearly 300,000, and tanks had reached the 2000 mark. The Government had to admit, however, that other sources would claim that the '... sanctions [were] producing decisive shortages which [would] lead to Saddam Hussein changing his mind ... but in our view that is not so'.[70]

The position now adopted by the Government, therefore, seemed to belie its earlier claims that Iraq was vulnerable to sanctions. In light of this it attempted to reconcile its seemingly contradictory position by claiming that the draft General Budget Law for 1991 passed on 3 January 1991 by the Iraqi National Assembly concentrated on strengthening the fighting capacity of the Armed Forces. As a Foreign Office Briefing Paper stated:

> Industry is set for a long haul: lack of spare parts will eventually have an adverse effect on output, but capital goods and machinery looted from Kuwait will help to keep essential services running; and critical military industries are being given priority. The Iraqi military will be the last to suffer from sanctions. It has a large arsenal and a domestic ammunition production capability. Much of its Soviet–style hardware is easily maintained, and it will be some time before shortages ... have any effect ... With these considerations in mind, after five-and-a-half months of sanctions being in force it is clear that it would be a long time before the Iraqi military machine came to a standstill.[71]

Douglas Hurd reinforced these points during the Gulf debate on the eve of the deadline. He stated that, although sanctions had not been watertight, there was evidence to suggest that they had reduced the flow of goods into Iraq by a substantial amount. However, with regard to food shortages, although rationing had been introduced, consumption remained fairly high since steps had been taken to force increases in agricultural output. Hurd went on to confirm that Iraqi industry was prepared for a long haul since many factories had been closed as a result of attempts to divert resources to the military sector. He also stated that '...the key sectors of [Iraqi] industry [were] likely on this basis to continue operations for a long time'.[72]

In addition to this, the Government also used the fact that the Iraqi airforce had not reduced the number of its sorties as evidence to suggest that Saddam Hussein did not see a need to conserve spare parts. A similar pattern was adopted by the Iraqi ground forces (including tanks and artillery), which continued to be deployed in large numbers in Iraq and Kuwait: '...and we see no evidence that the imposition of sanctions has so far affected these elements. We believe that Saddam Hussein could hold out for a long time without dramatically affecting his fighting arm, and that is the critical point'.[73]

Similarly, Douglas Hogg (the then Minister of State for Foreign Affairs) remained doubtful whether sanctions would succeed. He admitted that they had certainly caused hardship in Iraq, but questioned whether the hardship was at a level '... to cause the destabilisation of Saddam Hussein's regime. My own belief is that [they are] not ...' He also used the argument that the Iraqi people had failed to remove Saddam Hussein from power despite 'eight years of a pointless and brutal war', again promoted by Saddam Hussein ... Therefore my judgement is that sanctions alone will not bring about a complete and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait'.[74]

Of equal importance in providing support to the Government over the question of sanctions was the stand taken by the United States. As a letter from the US Representative to the President of the Security Council on 17 January 1991 showed, the American and British positions complemented each other to a great extent. As Thomas Pickering stated in the Security Council,

> 'President Saddam Hussein has rejected all ... efforts and has continued to defy the ... Security Council ... Economic sanctions have failed to force Iraq to comply with resolution 660 and the subsequent relevant resolutions. Iraq was continuing the destruction of Kuwait ... Further delay would only have prolonged the suffering of the Kuwaiti people and increased the risks to military forces of the United States and other States co-operating with the Government of Kuwait'.[75]

This highlights the fact that the US also was unwilling to allow sanctions more time to work. The similarity in British and US positions, therefore, is reinforced, as is the earlier point that, given the important role played by Britain in providing support for the US, the coalition's position could have been weakened had it not been for the British resolve in continually advocating that Iraq should withdraw from Kuwait. It could be perceived, therefore, that the British government believed that its stance had resulted in significant military and diplomatic support for the US led coalition.

The British government faced considerable opposition to its position throughout the crisis in its attempts to persuade Parliament, however, and the views expressed in the various debates held on the crisis can be divided into three clear-cut categories. The first was the position advocated by the government itself. The second category included those who took the view that force could never be justified and a third category, though not opposed to the possible use of force, nevertheless remained unconvinced by the Government's arguments. The positions of these various groups is elaborated on below.

The Chapter has thus far considered in detail the Government's position on various aspects of the crisis, and the essence of this argument has been that any pre-withdrawal negotiations with Saddam Hussein were out of the question. As Keohane stated,

> This approach insisted that any concessions, whether cosmetic or substantial, would be detrimental in that they would be seen as rewards for aggression. [He went on to argue that those] advocating this approach did not believe that war was necessarily the worst outcome for the region or for the international community. Instead, a worse situation would be one where Iraq controlled the oil reserves of

> Kuwait, dominated the oil exporters of the Gulf, and gained a capacity to deploy a range of weapons of mass destruction against neighbours and adversaries.[76]

Proponents of this view included leading Conservative politicians such as Mrs. Thatcher (later replaced by John Major, who retained the policy established by his predecessor), Douglas Hurd, Tom King, and Douglas Hogg. They held the view that Iraq had to withdraw from Kuwait and, although their declared method for forcing him out was sanctions, they were prepared to use force in support of UN resolutions.

Support for the Government's policy was also to be found across the political divide amongst the Labour Party's Front Benches. During the first Gulf debate, Neil Kinnock and other leading members of his Party provided unequivocal backing for the resolute stand adopted by the Government. He stated:

> Our unrelenting purpose must be to ensure that Saddam Hussein gets out of Kuwait ... [and] ... We consider that in the circumstances arising from the invasion ... the action taken in the United Nations and in the commitment of forces was right. In the very nature of Saddam Hussein's aggression, slowness or modesty in response would have been an invitation to him to continue over other borders and into greater excesses.[77]

And an important statement by Denis Healey shows the extent of consensus in the House (and elsewhere) at this time:

> The House will agree that Saddam Hussein will go down in history for at least one unique achievement: he has united all parties in the House of Commons, all Permanent Members of the Security Council, and the overwhelming majority of the members of the United Nations both on the objective of getting him out of Kuwait and on the best method of doing so – a blockade supported, if necessary, by appropriate force.[78]

The first debate ended, therefore, with broad consensus amongst the leaderships of the various Parliamentary Parties, and this undoubtedly encouraged the Government, since it was aware that in order to demonstrate its ability to play a central role in the Security Council it had to present a unified front nationally.

Nevertheless, the Government also recognised that there was division in the House. The existence of a small but vocal group, which first became apparent in the results of the voting following the 6-7 September 1990 Gulf debate, advocated a no-war approach, and although the overwhelming majority (437) voted in favour of the Government's policy, 35 Members voted against it. Awareness of this division led to the following comments by Tom King: '... I recognise that it is not cowardly to be a

pacifist and to believe that in no circumstances can force be justified. However, if that was the majority view of the House or the rest of the world, Saddam Hussein would safely continue to occupy Kuwait, and he would certainly do so...'[79]

Leading proponents of the no-war approach such as Tam Dalyell (Member for Linlithgow) advised against war on the grounds that conflict in the region would result in an ecological disaster if the oil wells were set alight. Others such as Dave Nellist (Member for Coventry, South-East) accused Britain and other Western members of the coalition of hypocrisy. Iraq, he insisted, had during the 1980s been seen as a moderating influence against the spread of Islamic fundamentalism following the Iranian Revolution. This view had resulted in France supplying over $25 billion worth of weapons, the US giving free satellite intelligence coupled with $5 billion worth of food subsidies and $2.5 billion worth of export guarantees. In addition, the Soviet Union had provided huge amounts of armaments, and lately Britain had been developing its trade links with Iraq.[80] To proponents of this approach it was important that ten European Union partners had not sent armed forces to the region, and as a consequence, they claimed that the resolution of the crisis was increasingly being seen as an Anglo-American effort, which could have detrimental results for the international coalition. As Keohane stated, 'For many adherents of this approach, the American-led international pressure against Iraq was motivated above all else by a concern for stable and cheap oil supplies'.[81]

Douglas Hogg disputed this belief by stating that if the Government had been motivated purely by the question of oil they would have settled with Saddam Hussein and the oil would have continued to flow. However, he stated that:

> It is manifestly undesirable for Saddam Hussein to have the oil reserves of Kuwait and Iraq because that will enable him in the long term to distort the oil markets in various ways: but we would not contemplate the use of force for that reason ... Notwithstanding the fact that the world is currently deprived of oil from both Kuwait and Iraq, oil supplies are adequate to meet our present requirements.[82]

As the voting patterns during the Gulf debate on the eve of the deadline showed, proponents of the no-war approach numbered only 57 against the 534 who voted in favour of Government policy. As Tom King was to confirm, of much greater concern were a larger group of Members who, although not opposed to the use of force, were of the opinion that sanctions should be given much longer to take effect. In attempting to persuade this particular group he questioned the basis of their evidence and stressed

that the British and other forces in the region were '...not a limitless credible military option. That has to be recognised by the House ... We should not expect our forces to wait indefinitely for sanctions to bring Saddam Hussein down. The multinational force and the coalition would probably not be sustained, economically or politically, for the length of time demanded by some of my hon. Friends'. He went on to stress that it was understandable that there would never be absolute consensus either in the House or in the international community but that 'we must seek substantial agreement'.[83]

During the 15 January 1990 debate John Major tried once more to sway the opinion of this particular group. His argument was based on the fact that Saddam Hussein had not taken advantage of the 'grace period' and so was still in Kuwait with forces which now exceeded 600,000 men and 4,000 tanks. He highlighted Iraq's past use of weapons of mass destruction, namely chemical attacks against Iranian forces during the Iran-Iraq war and against the Kurds at *Hallabja*. He referred to Iraq's systematic attempts to change populations, to expunge records and to erase national identity: 'The reality is clear for all to see. Iraq has used military force to wipe Kuwait off the face of the map and plunder its resources ... we are witnessing in Kuwait an attempt to eliminate an entire state ...'[84] Finally, Major insisted that Britain had welcomed, even at this late stage, a visit by the UN Secretary-General (Perez de Cuellar) to Baghdad, and Major used this particular visit to further strengthen the Government's argument that '...the confrontation [was] not just between the United States and Iraq or the West and Iraq, but between the United Nations and an aggressor that ha[d] overrun a neighbouring ... country'.[85]

The Labour Party's support for the various UN resolutions had, from the outset of the crisis, indicated strong support for the Government's position. However, its preference to continue to rely on sanctions and only use force as a last resort conflicted with its support for the very resolution which established the parameters for the use of force to remove Iraq from Kuwait, namely resolution 678. As Neil Kinnock's statements during the 15 January 1990 debate show, the Labour Party maintained its position over lengthening the time allowed for sanctions, but once the air campaign started the Party switched its attention towards supporting British forces going to war:

> From the outset of this crisis ... it has been clear that, in the interests of the whole world community, the will of the United Nations must

> prevail ... It is also clear that great devastation would result from a war. It would therefore be best, if at all possible, for the purposes of the United Nations to be achieved without ... the use of force, with sanctions and the blockade being given the maximum time to have effect. It is plainly the case, too, that if it should become certain that the objectives of the United Nations can be achieved only by the use of armed force against Iraq ... such force would then have to be used.[86]

A further factor for consideration was the question of legality over the use of force. Two opposing views gradually emerged from the various discussions in the House of Commons as well as within the Security Council. On the one hand the US and Britain were reluctant to place their national forces under the command of the Security Council given 'the 15 member Council's lack of relevant experience, cohesion, resources and decision-making procedures ...'[87] In addition Douglas Hurd was to state: 'It cannot be right to put the choice entirely and wholly within the machinery of the United Nations. We know that machinery ... it includes vetoes and ... We cannot leave open the possibility that necessary action against the aggressor would be blocked by such means'.[88] Furthermore, from the outset Mrs. Thatcher stressed that the coalition was justified in using force on the grounds that Resolution 661, apart from calling for comprehensive economic sanctions, also affirmed the right of individual or collective defence in response to armed attack, in accordance with article 51 of the UN Charter. Therefore, as she stated at the outset:

> ...we are not precluded by reason of any of the Security Council resolutions from exercising the inherent right of collective defence in accordance with the rules of international law ... To undertake now to use no military force without the further authority of the Security Council would be to deprive ourselves of a right in international law expressly affirmed by [SCR] 661; it would do injustice to the people of Kuwait, who are unable to use effective force themselves; it would be to hand an advantage to Saddam Hussein; and it could put our own forces in great peril. For these reasons, I am not prepared to limit our legitimate freedom of action.[89]

On the other hand there was the possibility that, despite supporting the various resolutions against Iraq, the Soviet Union (and China) would veto any action that was not under the direct control of the United Nations Military Staff Committee in accordance with the UN Charter. And, as Keohane stated, there was also the danger that relying on Article 51 of the Charter and resolution 661 could erode domestic cross-party support and ultimately reduce the legitimacy of the international coalition.[90]

In view of such problems, therefore, Britain and the United States sought another resolution which could reconcile these important differences. During the Security Council Debate which preceded voting over SCR 678 the US Representative appealed to idealist sentiments of the post-Cold War period by stating, 'We must not let the United Nations go the way of the League of Nations. We must fulfil our common vision of a peaceful and just post-Cold War world. But if we are to do so, we must meet the threat to international peace ... And that is why [this] debate ... will, I think, rank as one of the most important in the history of the United Nations. It will surely do much to determine the future of this body'.

The draft resolution (submitted by Britain, the US, Canada and the USSR) called upon Iraq to comply with SCR 660 and the subsequent relevant resolutions. This provision ensured that the Chinese delegation did not cast a negative vote. They had after all voted in favour of SCR 660 and all other relevant resolutions. The USSR was more difficult to appease since, though not opposed to the use of military force, it insisted that any action against Iraq be conducted under the control of the Military Staff Committee. However, it was noted that SCR 665 of 25 August 1990 had already permitted the use of force to strengthen the naval embargo against Iraq.[91] A precedent had already been set, therefore, whereby nations kept control of their own naval forces. Also, apart from providing Iraq with a further period of goodwill (specifically to appease the Soviet Union), the resolution stipulated that 'all necessary means' would be used only if Iraq had failed to comply by the deadline. Furthermore, by stipulating that force would be used only in order to bring about Iraq's compliance with SCR 660, Britain and the US were able to ensure Soviet co-operation[92] (See Appendix 3).

Retaining domestic cross party support for SCR 678 was just as important for the British Government. Shortly before the Security Council Debate Douglas Hurd sought to justify Government support for the forthcoming resolution in the House. He stressed that in order to intensify the pressures on Saddam Hussein to withdraw it was necessary to seek a resolution authorising 'all necessary means' to remove Iraq from Kuwait, as one of the intentions was to demonstrate to Saddam Hussein that the political will for the use of military force existed within the Security Council.[93]

*Iraq's weapons of mass destruction – changes in Britain's objectives?*

Another factor central to Britain's diplomatic efforts was to ensure that, once ousted from Kuwait, Iraq was not allowed to reconstitute its various programmes designed to build weapons of mass destruction. For this reason Britain played a central role in the adoption of the cease-fire resolution (SCR 687 of 3 April 1991), Section C of which placed stringent controls on Iraq's capacity to redevelop its weapons. Section 4.4 of this chapter considers the position over Iraq's weapons of mass destruction once the war was over, and its purpose is to show that, despite having fulfilled their objectives in removing Iraq from Kuwait and restoring the latter's legitimate government, the leaders of the coalition went further and established an ongoing weapons monitoring and verification regime in Iraq.

Britain's objectives had begun to alter even before the war began on 15 January 1991, and the intention here is to explore the evidence which demonstrates this fact. Britain's declared objectives remained the same throughout the pre-war months of diplomacy: namely the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, forced or otherwise, the restoration of the Emirate's legitimate government, and the restoration of peace and security in the region. It is this last objective, the 'restoration of peace and security in the region', which developed, for a time, into a source of some ambiguity. Since Britain played a central role in drafting Section C of SCR 687, a number of questions are raised. Prior to the adoption of SCR 687 on 3 April 1991, no official declaration of furthering the coalition's aims beyond those established in past resolutions was made. Did Britain's role in Section C of SCR 687, and subsequent monitoring of Iraq (as shown in Section 4.4 of the chapter) mean that the British Government already had an undeclared policy of applying controls to Iraq's programmes? And how far did this represent a change in British war aims?

In dealing with the first question, as various statements by British politicians during the months of pre-war diplomacy and sanctions show, it was inevitable that Iraq would remain subject to control and supervision by the United Nations and ultimately to concerned members of the coalition. Britain's central role in establishing Section C of SCR 687 (see Appendix 4) should not be surprising, since as early as September 1990 Mrs. Thatcher had made it clear that preventing Iraq from remilitarising was an important objective: '...no effort must be spared to prevent Iraq from obtaining the materials or technology to manufacture nuclear weapons'.[94] In addition, numerous articles in the national press (amongst other more specialised

sources) at the time sought to reveal the extent of Iraq's armament programmes. *Jane's Defence Weekly*, for instance, pointed to Iraq's successes at converting Soviet Scuds into longer range Al-Hussein and Al-Abbas surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs)[95] (for further details see chapter 3).

The fact that other Conservative politicians were concerned about Iraq's weapons programmes became apparent in the House when Sir Peter Emery questioned Hurd about the status of Iraq's nuclear weapons programmes and Britain's attitude towards them. On that occasion Hurd announced that '...even if Saddam Hussein were to comply fully with the Security Council resolutions, we would not have solved all the problems, and that when considering matters such as the retention of sanctions and the retention of forces we would have to take into account the dangers that my hon. Friend has described'.[96]

Another indication of Britain's policy with regard to Iraq's weapons programmes was provided by the following important statement by Mrs. Thatcher on 7 November 1990: 'Britain and others have argued that Iraq's chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons capability must be eliminated, so that it can never again threaten world peace'.[97] Furthermore, once the air campaign had started, Britain's Defence Secretary (Tom King) was quoted in the *Financial Times* on 28 January as stating that disarming Iraq was an aim of the leaders of the coalition. This was the first public acknowledgement in the UK that the original objectives had expanded to include this element. In his statement Tom King revealed that the disarming of Iraq's war machine had formed part of fulfilling the objectives of SCR 678: '...It has to be right, after all the effort and all the costs and all the pain we have been involved in. We cannot leave this half finished with a continuing menace, continuing to threaten other states in the region'.[98] This represents conclusive evidence that despite Mrs. Thatcher's resignation on 28 November 1990, the change in policy to include this particular element continued apace.

John Major's interview with the *Times* on 31 January 1991 was of equal importance in showing that allied war aims were altering to include the possibility of the maintenance of some form of post-war allied presence in the region. The *Times* stated that during his interview, 'He left open the possibility of Western forces continuing to attack the war machine in Iraq even after the expulsion of President Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait'.[99] This particular interview with John Major is of particular importance in that it was referred to by Jim Sillars (Member for

Glasgow, Govan) during the Gulf War debate on 21 February 1991, with the intention of indicating that the Government's war aims had altered beyond what was established in the original UN resolutions.

Once Iraq had been forced out of Kuwait, politicians continued to stress, in the lead up to the adoption of SCR 687, that the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction was a major objective of the British Government and other leading members of the coalition. As Tom King stated on 19 March 1991, '... eliminating Saddam Hussein's nuclear, biological and chemical capability is something to which we attach the greatest importance', and as Mark Lennox-Boyd (the then Permanent Under-Secretary of State in the Foreign Office) confirmed, 'We want Iraq to comply fully with the non-proliferation treaty and with the relevant biological and chemical weapons conventions...we shall be working at the United Nations for [their] destruction under international supervision'.[100]

Finally, the contention that Britain's war aims had broadened beyond merely freeing Kuwait and restoring its legitimate Government is further confirmed by a report published by the Foreign Affairs Committee. This stated that, 'The thickening out of the policy within the overall aims, became apparent after the war with the passing of SCR 687...with the comprehensive nature of its planned controls over Iraq ... includ[ing] such...provisions on the destruction of weapons of mass destruction'.[101]

The discourse analysed here has therefore seemed to suggest that the British government perceived Iraq's presence in Kuwait to be a threat and this perhaps indicated why Britain appeared determined to play a role in condemning Iraq and subsequently isolating it within the international community. Having failed to detect the imminent invasion, the British response centred on a number of issues. Under the leadership of Mrs. Thatcher there was no doubt in the minds of leading politicians that Iraq had to withdraw from Kuwait, and this no-compromise approach was a reflection of the importance attached by the British government to the region. A sizeable expatriate population (approximately 50,000), defence agreements with various States, significant economic interests, Britain's continuing reliance on Middle Eastern crude, and the uncertainty caused by Iraq's invasion are all factors which, when taken together, seem to support the hypothesis.

The end of the Cold War raised the stakes for the United Nations. With increased prospects for co-operation and action, the Organisation's future depended

upon a successful conclusion to the crisis. The opportunity to play an important role in a revived United Nations in turn enabled Britain to strengthen its own position as a permanent member of the UN.

The crisis also enabled Britain to revive its so-called "special relationship" with its leading ally, the United States. It appeared that the two States had adopted a similar position over the invasion and if so this meant that the likelihood of their objectives being fulfilled had increased. Britain's support over the question of refusing pre-withdrawal negotiations, the strength of the no-compromise stance adopted by its politicians, and its stand over the contentious issue of sanctions versus military force enabled the US leadership to acquire a much higher degree of legitimacy, despite the many disparate voices amongst the coalition. The joint diplomatic stance adopted by these two States ultimately paved the way for military action with the Security Council's blessing.

The constructed world in which British policy makers worked privileged the relationship with the US and the perception that the British government was eager to revive its so-called "special-relationship" with the US could be construed as another element that may have influenced British action. It is also a further indication that multiple explanations for British foreign policy towards the region are present within the discourse, even though some, such as economic interests, are far more prominent than others. Although chapters 2 and 3 provided evidence of the prominence of economic factors within the discourse during the period 1979-July 1990 they also suggested the existence of other explanations. An analysis of the way in which the British government reacted to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait further reveals that economic interests were not the only influential factor. The next step is to go beyond Britain's diplomatic role and analyse the extent of its military involvement in the region during the crisis and post-crisis periods.

## Section 3: Britain's Military Presence in the Persian Gulf, 1990/91

The British contribution to the coalition forces was on a much smaller scale than that of its principal ally, the United States. Nevertheless, as stated at the beginning of this chapter, by January 1991 the British military presence in the region was significant and amounted to over 45,000 personnel. The purpose of this section, therefore, is to demonstrate the extent of this presence during the Gulf crisis. A detailed examination

of the types and numbers of personnel and equipment is beyond the remit of this thesis and such issues have been dealt with elsewhere.[102] However, a brief examination will be useful, and specific details will be included when they contribute to the overall picture.

Operation Granby was the 'most comprehensive deployment of UK forces outside NATO since the end of the Second World War'.[103] The months leading up to the outbreak of the conflict were characterised both by a failure to persuade Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait, and by success in preserving the integrity of the Coalition and ensuring that the new-found co-operation between the principal international actors continued. This success was reflected in the eventual adoption of SCR 678, which authorised the Coalition members to use "all necessary means" to remove Iraq from Kuwait. In parallel with these diplomatic efforts it was deemed necessary to continue the build-up of military forces. In light of this the British deployment progressed through three specific stages which, for the sake of convenience, may be labelled as the *initial stage, the build-up* and the *full commitment*. As these various stages are analysed it will be shown that the objectives of Operation Granby gradually expanded. Initially the aim was to deter further aggression by Iraq, but this developed to include securing (with coalition allies) Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait, restoring Kuwait's legitimate government, and re-establishing peace and security in the region. Iraqi refusal to fulfil the UN's objectives in the form of Security Council resolutions therefore meant that ultimately military force was employed.

Following the breakdown of negotiations between Iraq and the other Arab States, up to 100,000 Iraqi troops had massed on the border with Kuwait. On 2 August Iraq invaded, with the initial thrust being led by around 30,000 troops of the Republican Guard Force, including armoured brigades equipped with over 350 T72, T54 and T55 tanks. The advance towards Kuwait City was rapid and the only opposition by the Kuwaiti National Guard was quickly neutralised. In addition, some units of the Iraqi force broke off from the main advance and proceeded to occupy the strategically important islands of *Bubiyan* and *Warbah* at the head of the Gulf.[104] Although the invasion took Britain and other States by surprise, the diplomatic response was rapid and was closely followed by an increase in the US, British and other military forces in the Gulf region.

Another factor indicated within the discourse was the style of Mrs. Thatcher's leadership, which would seem to contribute to an explanation of the British opposition to Iraq's invasion. During a personal interview, Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine labelled this initial response as '... not untypical of Margaret Thatcher's style of government. It was the same sort of reaction that you saw from her in 1982 when the Argentineans invaded the Falkland Islands. There is no doubt ... she was instrumental in encouraging those who were advising George Bush that we had to do something purposeful about what had happened'.[105] This opinion suggests a further variable in the context of factors contributing to an overall picture of British foreign policy.

Immediately following the invasion of Kuwait, the British Government was faced with the possibility that Saddam Hussein might go on to invade the north-eastern territories of Saudi Arabia and seize its oilfields. There was also a general belief that he could then seize the smaller members of the GCC as well. After all, his initial threats had not been purely against Kuwait but had also included the UAE. That there was concern amongst the international community was again confirmed by Sir Patrick Hine, who stated in his despatch to the *London Gazette*: '... there were strong indications that President Saddam Hussein had further ambitions. He massed 100,000 troops on the border with Saudi Arabia and mobilised 140,000 volunteers in Southern Iraq'.[106]

The question emerges whether it was this factor which persuaded Mrs. Thatcher that some form of rapid response was necessary in order to prevent any further aggression. As Group Captain Lambert stated during an interview:

> You cannot understate the power that the British Prime Minister has in ordering her Ministers and indeed Chiefs of Staff ... she would be ill-advised to say to a Chief of Staff against their advice do this, this and this. But at the end of the day if she determines that's what's to be done then it will be done. Normally what happens in this process is that the Minister says something must be done give me options ... in terms of personnel, financial costs, risk, four or five options...Now I didn't see any of that and I don't think much of it was probably done at that stage because I think ... there was concern to get something there quickly.[107]

Initial British deployments were made in direct response to the invasion, therefore, and to prevent the possibility of further aggression against Saudi Arabia and other GCC States.[108] On 8 August President Bush announced that the US was deploying troops to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf on the invitation of the Kingdom. This was

immediately followed, on 9 August, by an announcement on the part of the then Secretary of State for Defence, Tom King, that Britain would also be increasing its military presence there, thereby raising its profile in the region.

This initial increase revolved around the deployment of air defence and attack elements and on expanding the already established naval presence (See chapters 2 and 3). As regards the initial naval presence, this was based on the Royal Navy's Armilla Patrol group WHISKY, consisting of RN ships, HMS York, Battleaxe, Jupiter, with RFA Orangeleaf. Further naval deployments including HMS Diligence, Olna, and Fort Grange were announced on 14 August and HMS Gloucester's deployment was announced on 29 August. HMS Olna, Fort Grange and Diligence had arrived in the Gulf by 19 September and on 20 September ministerial approval was given for the deployment of three Attacker Class patrol craft (Attacker, Hunter and Striker) for counter-terrorist duties.

The anticipation of a mine threat in the Gulf led to a further rapid expansion of Britain's naval presence as three Mine Counter Measure Vessels (MCMVs), HMS Atherstone, Cattistock and Hurworth, were deployed, initially to the eastern Mediterranean and then to the Gulf by 19 September. HMS Herald, designated to be the command ship for this particular group, arrived on station shortly after, on 23 September.[109]

As regards the RAF, Tom King announced on 7 September that the following deployments had been made:

- 9 August 90: Government announced the deployment of a squadron of 12 Tornado F3s, a squadron of 12 Jaguar, and 3 Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft to the Gulf.
- 11 August 90: Tornado F3s arrived in Dhahran (Saudi Arabia) and were operational within 2 hours of arrival. By 7 September they had already flown over 200 sorties in support of the air defence shield of Saudi Arabia.
- 13-15 August 90: Nimrods arrived in Seeb (Oman) and were operational immediately upon arrival. Jaguars and 2 VC10 tankers deployed to Thumrait (Oman).
- 23 August 90: Government announced the deployment of a squadron of 12 Tornado GR1s accompanied by 2 VC10 Tanker aircraft to Muharraq in Bahrain. Arrived in Bahrain on 28 August.
- 31 August 90: Four Rapier fire units from RAF Regiment deployed to Muharraq.
- 14 September 90: Government announced the deployment of a second squadron of 12 Tornado GR1s (including GR1As) and half a squadron of 6 Tornado F3s which arrived at Dhahran on 22 September – (For a map of the region see Appendix 5).

Further deployments included personnel in support of Rapier and ground defence tasks, medical facilities including a field hospital, logistic build-up to establish effective communications, and the establishment of chemical defence and decontamination units to support British forces and also to provide training to Saudi units.[110]

As regards land forces, Britain did not in this initial stage deploy large numbers of ground elements since they would have required extensive logistic support and would have been very vulnerable if present on a small scale.[111] Consequently ground deployments during the first stage were few and included the following:

- 10 August 90: Communications detachments from 30 Signal Regiment deployed to Dhahran.
- 12 August 90: R Signals detachments deployed to Oman and Bahrain.
- 20 August 90: Army medical support troops deployed to Dhahran.
- 26 August 90: RE airfield damage repair team advance party deployed to Bahrain.
- 1 September 90: Army communications detachment deployed to Seeb and Bahrain.
- 12 September 90: Deployment of 22 Field Hospital began.

Since the task of fulfilling Britain's objectives during this period fell to a large extent on the Royal Navy, the initial duties of the naval group were defined as providing protection for entitled merchant shipping, being prepared to support the evacuation of British dependants from the Gulf States, and supporting the activities of other British forces in the area.[112] In this endeavour past out-of-area peacetime deployments and exercises, such as *Saif Sareea* (see chapter 2) proved invaluable. Throughout the 1980s the Royal Navy had maintained the Armilla Patrol in the Gulf region in order to protect entitled shipping and it therefore had the advantage of familiarity with the area, which proved equally important once SCR 665 was adopted on 25 August 1990. As the previous section highlighted, this groundbreaking resolution authorised measures to halt shipping in order to inspect and verify cargoes.[113] Consequently, SCR 665 shifted the objectives of the Armilla Patrol from the protection of British merchant shipping to the enforcement of UN sanctions in co-operation with other naval forces,[114] thereby demonstrating the extent to which the naval operation was conducted on a multilateral basis. Defence Ministers of the Western European Union (WEU) met on 21 August to establish 'how best to co-ordinate the efforts of the

maritime forces they were sending to the Gulf'. Though each State retained national control over its own naval forces, 'guidelines were established to ensure the closest possible co-ordination both within the WEU and with other allied navies in the Gulf, such as the US Navy and the Royal Australian Navy'.[115] Britain's deployment of maritime surface surveillance patrol aircraft (Nimrods) demonstrated its own commitment to the UN-enforced sanctions. Ultimately Britain made a significant contribution to the enforcement effort, 'challenging a total of 3,171 merchant ships and participating in 36 boardings in the period up to the official cease-fire. In addition RAF Nimrod aircraft flew 295 surveillance sorties from their base at Seeb in support of embargo operations'.[116]

During the initial stage the increase in Britain's military presence in the region was based primarily, therefore, upon RN and RAF deployments. Requests for assistance made by various GCC States was one of the factors which facilitated Britain's rapid response. The Government's objective was to provide the Gulf States with reassurance at a time when further aggression by Saddam Hussein could not be ruled out, and it was essential that the initial commitments should arrive in the area quickly if they were to be effective in deterring him. This was confirmed by Group Captain Lambert who stated, '... I do know ... that once the order was issued it was deployed very quickly – it was there in about 24 hours and operational very shortly after that'.[117] In addition, Mrs. Thatcher stated on 6 September, 'Saddam Hussein could have gone on to invade the north-eastern territories of Saudi Arabia and seize its oilfields. Had he succeeded, he could have taken the smaller Gulf States too. It is thanks to rapid action by the United States ... and prompt support by Britain, that the aggressor has been halted'.[118]

As section 4.2 showed, diplomatic pressure had also been building up on Iraq through the adoption of a series of UN resolutions demanding Iraq's withdrawal and the restoration of Kuwait's government. The aim of achieving this by sanctions and other diplomatic measures did not, however, mean that the possible use of force was discounted. Indeed, the British Government remained adamant throughout this period that the legal basis for the use of force had been established. As Tom King stated: 'Our immediate concern has been to join in the efforts to avoid further aggression by peaceful means by making the United Nations embargo work. If it does not, then of course we have had to make it clear that we cannot rule out anything ... it may be necessary to use force'.[119]

*Section 3.2: Phase 2: The Build-up: 14 September – 28 November 1990*

This phase was characterised by two important elements. First, Iraq's continuing refusal to abide by the UN resolutions led to an increase in the perception that the use of force might be inevitable. However, regardless of the final outcome, Iraqi intransigence did have the effect of persuading principal members of the coalition to continue to build up their forces in the Gulf. Second, the close diplomatic and political relationship that the United States and Britain had established over the question of the invasion possibly contributed to the subsequent military co-operation.

As regards the first issue, section 4.2 above showed the extent of Britain's resolve over the invasion. Apart from seeing a further significant increase in the numbers of British personnel and equipment in the Gulf, the period from mid-September 1990 up to the adoption of SCR 678 on 29 November 1990 witnessed a change in British policy with regard to ground forces. On 14 September 1990 the Secretary of State for Defence announced the Government's decision to deploy the 7th Armoured Brigade from the British Army on the Rhine (BAOR) to the Gulf:

> The Brigade, including War Maintenance Reserves [comprised] 9,500 men, 145 Challenger Tanks, 110 Warrior infantry fighting vehicles and 28 M109 Guns. Its support ... include[d] the provision of 2 engineer regiments, 2 transport regiments, 2 ordnance battalions, 2 armoured workshops and a host of other specialist units including an armoured field ambulance.[120]

and the following list shows the extent of British force deployments during this second phase:

**Royal Navy**

- 10 October 90: RFA Argus deployed to Gulf to serve as Primary Casualty Reception Ship.
- 10 October – 15 November 90: HMS Brazen, London, Attacker, Hunter, Striker, Cardiff, Argus and Resource arrived at respective stations in the Gulf and Cyprus.
- 22 November 90: Government announced deployment of 2 more MCMVs, HMS Dulverton and Ledbury.
- 29 November 90: Ministerial approval given for the deployment of 12 RN Sea King MKIV helicopters to support 1 (BR) Armoured Division.

**Army**

- 14 September 90: Government announced deployment of 7th Armoured Brigade.
- 20 September 90: Ministerial approval given for deployment of an Engineer Field Troop (RE) to Bahrain: Arrived on 23 September 90.

- 15 November 90: 7th Armoured Brigade declared operational.
- 22 November 90: Government announced the deployment of 4th Brigade, a divisional headquarters and support to join 7th Armoured Brigade and to form 1 (BR) Armoured Division.

**RAF**

- 14 September 90: Government announced the deployment of a second squadron of 12 Tornado GR1s and half a squadron of Tornado F3s.
- 22 September 90: 10 October 90 – arrival and redeployment of Tornados and Jaguars in Gulf region.
- 15 October 90: Four Rapier Fire Units deployed from Cyprus to Muharraq.
- 17 October 90: Additional VC10 tanker aircraft deployed to Seeb.
- 29 October 90: Ministerial approval for the deployment of 15 RAF Puma support helicopters in support of 7th Armoured Brigade – in theatre by 4 November 90.
- 30 October 90: Ministerial approval for the deployment of Tornado GR1s fitted with ALARM: began arriving in theatre (Tabuk) by 23 November 90.
- 27 November 90: 26 Squadron (Rapier) RAF Regiment deployed to Tabuk.[121]

As this summary demonstrates, the increase in Britain's military presence during this second period was significant, and this confirmed the British resolve to contribute to the use of military force if sanctions failed. In giving evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee during the crisis, Waldegrave confirmed that Britain was prepared to shoulder the considerable financial burden of its contribution since the military activity was in Britain's own interests. He stated, 'Our principal contribution to this [effort] is in the military costs knowing that the military activity is in our own interests'.[122] This statement is an important one and goes to core of the thesis. If it was in Britain's own interests to go to war as Waldegrave states, then what were those interests and if we define those interests in terms of material economic interests are they sufficient in themselves to explain the policy? This question will be dealt with in detail in the main conclusion since the discourse has suggested that policy was influenced by multiple factors, some of which have been highlighted, and not merely economic interests.

Another concern for the British Government was the possibility of further enhancement of the so-called "special relationship" with the US. In this light the question of US/British military co-operation took on a particularly important dimension. As Sir Patrick Hine stated:

> we had a very similar set of political objectives upon which, of course, the military aims flowed and these were fleshed out in a series of discussions which we had at the political / military level between

> London and Washington ... to see to what extent we could harmonise the political objectives and to get consensus on what the military aims of the operations would be if it came to it.

And as regards military co-operation:

> ... Very quickly after we had deployed forces there and I had been made the Joint Commander we established very close relationships with the Americans at the military level ... my equivalent was General Schwarzkopf who set up his headquarters in-theatre – I had mine actually back here ... but I was out in the Gulf area every two or three weeks and ... so I became very close to Schwarzkopf and I therefore understood what his thinking was and he was able to explain to me his concept for re-possessing Kuwait if it came to that.[123]

The central most important characteristic during this second phase, therefore, was the degree of influence that these two allies exerted on each other. The need to retain British influence in the Security Council was of particular importance to the US, while the British felt that there was a need to retain a voice over the deployment of their own troops in what was rapidly becoming a US-led military operation. It is here that the role played by the British commanders was of particular importance.

At this stage it was the task of Lieutenant General Peter de la Billière (British Forces Commander Middle East) to ensure that the increased British commitment in the form of the 7th Armoured Brigade be given a clear role in the region. Consequently, even though ultimately the Brigade remained under the control of the UK, 'it was agreed that the use of British forces in combat operations would be the subject of joint decisions'. Hence to ensure its effectiveness as part of a multinational force it was placed under the tactical control of the American armed forces. In this sense, therefore, Billière saw his role at this point as being more to do with co-ordinating and supervising rather than being a direct command role.[124]

It was during this second phase also that the US Administration took the decision to significantly increase its force levels in the Gulf. This decision, taken on 8 November, reflected the US perception that diplomacy and other peaceful measures such as the sanctions were not forcing Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait. Similarly, on 22 November the British Government, in response to the American decision, also deemed it necessary to shift its own force levels from a defensive to an offensive posture. The Government's decision to deploy 4th Brigade to join the 7th Armoured Brigade in Saudi Arabia resulted in the formation of 1 (BR) Armoured Division (further tri-service enhancements were also announced - as listed above).[125]

The manner in which the British Division was formed highlights not only the importance which the British Government and Commanders attached to wishing to retain some degree of influence on the US, but also demonstrates the value that the Government attached to its objective of wanting to appear independent. This objective had its roots not only in Britain's desire to retain control over its armed forces in the Gulf but also in an attempt to appeal to the GCC's concerns of over-reliance on the US.[126] The decision to form the new significantly larger Division led to British insistence that, rather than coming under the tactical command of the US Marine Corps, the command structure should be switched to US Army control. As de la Billière stated:

> When it began to look as if we may go into an offensive mode, it was my opinion that [we]...had a larger force out there which could operate within its own boundaries and under the general direction which would be coming from a corps, rather than to have a brigade which would be under tactical control of an American Division ... [it was] desirable to be able to stand independent, even if you [were] under the overall control of another nation, so I was quite keen that we should increase our force levels so that we had a Division out there and thereby be able to negotiate to some extent where we should be able to deploy, and also to give the senior British military field commander the level of intelligence which I [wanted] to see him have.[127]

The decision to form the Division, therefore, reflected the British objective to play a more important part in the armed opposition to Iraq. Remaining under the US Marines would have meant that their capability would have been enhanced to 'beyond that which was necessary in order to be a diversionary force', as it was originally intended. As de la Billière went on to state 'I did not really, therefore, want us to be just a rather over-generous part of a diversionary force which would not have really stretched the British capability and commitment that we had put out there'.[128]

As Section 4.2 showed, the decision to adopt SCR 678 and ultimately go to war against Iraq was based upon the premise that mandatory economic sanctions were not working. The Government claimed that since the middle of August 1990 Iraq had been 'construct[ing] an extensive line of fortifications along the border between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia...[which was] later extended into southern Iraq'. Consisting of ditches, razor-wire fences and minefields, these fortifications were intended to delay advancing forces. In addition to building up such defences Iraq had been moving troops into positions in Kuwait and southern Iraq (see map in Appendix 5), and the Government estimated that by mid-January 1991 Iraq had over 40 divisions,

with about 4,500 tanks and 3,250 artillery pieces and, in addition '...more than 20 divisions with over 1,000 tanks and 1,000 artillery pieces remained in central and northern Iraq for internal security duties and as a potential reserve'.[129] Using such evidence, the Government argued that even though the sanctions had been thoroughly applied, the test of their effectiveness was not whether shortages were increasing but whether they brought about a change in policy. As Douglas Hurd stated, 'It is obviously true they have not so far done that ... and looking ahead, our judgement is that there is no certainty that they will do so'.[130]

During a personal interview Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine stated that military factors were also important in the decision not to allow sanctions longer to work. He stated that Saddam Hussein's use of chemical weapons in the past had led to the allied assumption that they would be used again during any conflict with the coalition. He went on to state that

> ...we could protect our armed forces against chemical attack wearing normal NBC clothing – but you can imagine wearing that kind of clothing in very high temperatures was really something we wished to avoid. So in our view there was a winter window of opportunity for mounting an operation of that kind which began around November and ended around March. And by March of course you were running up against Ramadan – so if we were going to take this kind of military action the judgement both in United States amongst most military and certainly in the UK [was] we had to do it within that four month period[131].

A conversation between Sir Patrick Hine and US General Colin Powell (during October 1990) also seemed to suggest that Britain may have sought to influence the Americans. At that stage Powell seemed to be against the use of force and believed that sanctions should be given time to work. As Sir Patrick Hine stated,

> I asked him how long are [were] talking about ... and he said up to two years, maybe more which quite surprised me. Then I said to him, 'well look you're building up to a level of around 230,000 American personnel alone in the Gulf area, we are building up our forces ... and you can't hold them there forever and if come next March or April and we haven't mounted a military operation you'll have to start thinning them down and Saddam will see that you are thinning them down and will conclude that you haven't got the stomach for a fight and ... hail a great victory', and I said frankly the option of assembling them all together once again in the Autumn of 1991 I don't think is politically tenable so that either sanctions and/or diplomatic pressure have worked to persuade Saddam Hussein to withdraw ... by around January or February at the very latest or we have to mount a military operation this winter.[132]

He further indicated that this view was supported by the great majority of military people as well as by politicians: 'I mean the politicians particularly his (Powell's) boss, Dick Cheney, was not in favour of waiting a couple of years'.[133] Whether or not the British had any degree of influence over the Americans is not an issue here, rather the important factor is that the discourse indicates the government's desire to develop a level of influence.

The fact that the British inner War Cabinet, including amongst others Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine, General Sir Peter de la Billière, the Prime Minister (Mrs. Thatcher and from November 1990 John Major), Defence Secretary Tom King, and Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, agreed that something had to be done that winter was also confirmed by Sir Patrick Hine: 'I can't recall any member of the War Cabinet who argued that we should give sanctions longer ... We were all agreed that something had to be done that winter'.[134]

Phase 2, therefore, was characterised by the perception that sanctions would not work and as a result it was deemed necessary to significantly increase force levels, thereby indicating a shift from a defensive to an offensive posture. One of the consequences of this was that it led to British attempts to ensure a degree of control over its own armed forces, despite coming under US tactical command. Although Britain did not match its ally in force levels the logistic exercise to shift large amounts of tri-service equipment, and what now amounted to over 40,000 personnel, showed the extent of Britain's increasing presence in the region. The stage was now set, following the adoption of SCR 678, for the next phase of the crisis, the *full commitment.*

*Section 3.3: Phase 3: The Full Commitment: 29 November 1990 – 3 April 1991*

The above analysis has shown in detail the extent of the British military build-up in the Persian Gulf region during the months leading up to the adoption of SCR 678. The final third phase, however, provides further insights into British policy towards the region. The decision to go to war against Iraq as part of a multilateral coalition should not be underestimated, since the fact that it was prepared to resort to military force provides support for the contention that Britain regarded the Gulf region as important. By the start of the ground campaign at the end of February 1991 Britain had more

than 45,000 personnel in the region, along with a large quantity of equipment. The tables below show the build-up during the final stage.

**Royal Navy**

- 5 January 91: RN Sea King MKIVs in theatre and operational.
- 15 January – 19 March 91: HMS Dulverton, Ledbury, Manchester, Exeter, Brave, Brilliant, Hecla, Bicester, Brecon, Brocklesby and RFA Bayleaf arrived on station.

**Army**

- 5 December 90: 1(BR) Armoured Division advance party arrived in theatre.
- 19 December 90: The main air move of 4th Brigade and divisional troops began.
- 11 January 91: Air Move of 1(BR) Armoured Division completed.
- 18 January 91: Government announced the deployment of 1 Coldstream Guards to form PW guard force.
- 24 January 91: Government announced the deployment of 1 King's Own Scottish Borderers and 1 Royal Highland Fusiliers to increase the PW force.
- 1 February 91: 1(BR) Armoured Division was declared as being operationally ready.

**RAF**

- 1 December 90: Ministerial approval for the deployment of a further 4 Puma and 12 Chinook helicopters.
- 14 – 16 December 90: Tanker aircraft redeployed to Muharraq and King Khalid International Airport.
- 20 December 90 – 3 January 91: Ministerial approval for the deployment of a further 12 Tornado GR1s to Dhahran all of which had arrived by 3 January 91.
- 14 January 91: 6 Tornado 1As deployed to Dhahran.
- 24 January 91: The Government announced the deployment of a half squadron of Buccaneers, which arrived in Muharraq by 28 January.
- 5 February 91: Ministerial approval for the deployment of Tornado GR1s fitted with TIALD to Tabuk.
- 8 February 91: The Government announced the deployment of a further 6 Buccaneers.
- 10 February 91: Tornado GR1s (with TIALD) arrived in Tabuk and the Buccaneers arrived in Muharraq.[135]

The period between 29 November and the start of the Ground war at the end of February 1991 was characterised, therefore, by a significant continuous build-up of British forces in the Gulf region. Of particular importance was the immense logistical exercise undertaken to enable the tri-service elements to become operational. As Sir Patrick Hine stated: 'The logistic outload required the use of an extensive sea tail, RAF air transport assets, and chartered civilian air cargo aircraft. The first ship sailed

on deployment for Operation Granby on 28 September and the last ship arrived on 15 February'.[136] Furthermore, the 1991 Defence White Paper highlighted that a total of 400,000 tonnes of freight, including 80,000 tonnes of ammunition and some 15,000 vehicles (of which 2,600 were armoured fighting vehicles) were transported to the Gulf. RAF transport aircraft carried most personnel as well as over 30,000 tonnes of freight, and the Royal Navy was able to utilise logistics arrangements that were already established in support of the Armilla operation.

It was during this third phase that the 1st (BR) Armoured Division was deployed and this in itself was a major undertaking. The units attached to the Division travelled to the Gulf between October 1990 and January 1991. Having been trained to fight in north-west Europe, a significant amount of preparation was required to prepare them for the new desert conditions. The fact that over 500,000 litres of fuel, 50 tonnes of rations and 400,000 litres of water were required each day demonstrates the degree of logistical problems faced by the British forces, but the numbers of personnel and equipment deployed also indicates the extent of the Government's commitment to the region.[137] The fact that a significant proportion of Britain's armed forces had been put on a war footing within the space of a few months showed how crucial the Government considered the Gulf region to be.

Despite the extent of the logistical exercise, a number of important factors not only simplified matters for the British but also demonstrated the multilateral nature of the coalition. Of greatest importance was the high degree of host nation support. Saudi Arabia not only offered the facilities at Jubayl (see map at Appendix 5), a vast, modern and little used port with full infrastructure, but also allowed Britain to use several of its modern military airfields, some of which were already used by Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) Tornados. In addition, British forces had access to free and unlimited supplies of Saudi Arabian fuel, accommodation, food, water and transport. A post-GW2 Defence Committee report claimed that without this support Britain would have been stretched to provide the logistic support required.[138]

Another important issue was the fact that most of the forces that had been designated for deployment out-of-area were excluded from Britain's contribution, while forces rarely contemplated in such a role were included. The deployment of 4 landing ships logistics (LSLs) and 18 Sea King helicopters meant that a significant part of the UK's amphibious capability was in the Gulf. In addition 95 percent of the Royal Corps of Transport were deployed on operations in the Gulf, as were all of

RAF Germany's support helicopters. Furthermore, since Britain had committed a significant proportion of its forces to the Gulf, its ability to fulfil other commitments, particularly with regard to British forces in Germany, was seriously depleted. This factor not only highlights the level of importance that the British Government attached to the Gulf (as shown through the significant increase in its military presence), but also confirms that the end of the Cold War had contributed to the perception that the threat had altered.

Britain's support for President Bush's invitation to Tariq Aziz (the Iraqi Foreign Minister) for talks in December 1990 was based upon the British government's perception that it needed to appear to "go the extra mile for peace". However, the Government was also opposed to the view that the talks be seen as conciliatory towards Iraq. For this reason, Douglas Hogg (the then Minister for Foreign Affairs) stressed that the purpose behind the talks should not be misunderstood. As he stated: 'It is very important that there should be no misunderstanding of the nature or purpose of the talks ... [they are] to ensure that Saddam Hussein understands clearly that he must comply fully and unconditionally, with the ... resolutions; and that, if he does not do so, he faces the risk of being driven out of Kuwait by force'.[139]

In December, however, Saddam Hussein announced that all foreign hostages would be released. As a consequence the Government advised all British nationals to leave Iraq and Kuwait, but also stressed a thinning out in the other GCC States. This suggests that the Government still thought that there was the possibility of further invasion by Iraq.[140] Apart from this one concession, which was welcomed by the Government, Iraq's intransigence remained absolute and hostilities seemed increasingly probable, and when the deadline elapsed on 15 January 1991 Iraqi forces still occupied Kuwait. Indeed, as the Prime Minister John Major stated during the 15 January ('91) debate on the Gulf, Iraqi forces in and around Kuwait had now increased to over 600,000 men, 4,000 tanks, and more than 3,000 artillery pieces.[141]

There are numerous accounts on the conduct of the war to free Kuwait and it is not intended to add to them here.[142] However, a summary of the main points is provided for the purpose of further strengthening the contention that the Gulf region was of paramount importance to Britain. The campaign to free Kuwait began on the night of 16 January 1991, with full British participation. The initial objective was to weaken Iraq's resolve to fight by attacking its military infrastructure. For over a

month, therefore, aircraft from coalition forces, (primarily US, British, French, Saudi Arabian and Syrian) attacked Iraq's military capability including airfields, aircraft, missile sites, nuclear and chemical facilities and other military targets. As Prime Minister John Major was to stress to the House at the start of the air campaign, the '... instructions to our pilots and those of other airforces [are to] avoid causing civilian casualties'.[143] It remained an objective of the Government throughout the war to show that, despite the inevitability of civilian casualties, everything was being done to minimise the risks.

The priority at this stage, therefore, was to engage and destroy military targets in Iraq and Kuwait through a massive air campaign. The declared purpose of this campaign was to '...make it impossible for Iraq over time to sustain its forces in Kuwait, which will then become far more vulnerable to attack from air and from land'.[144] Air attacks against Iraq continued for over a month and as an increasing number of military targets were destroyed the weight of the campaign shifted to attacks on Iraq's ground forces in and around Kuwait. Concern over the possibility of Israeli involvement in the war in response to Scud missile attacks on Israeli cities meant that the attempt to destroy Iraqi missile delivery systems remained an important objective. As Tom King stated: 'We know why it has been done ... He wishes to draw Israel into the war in the hope of inflaming Arab opinion, breaking the multinational coalition and inciting a holy war' and therefore '... the Scud missile clearly represents a challenge ...[and] we are making every effort to identify and destroy [them]'.[145] Sir Patrick Hine also confirmed Saddam Hussein's motives behind the Scud attacks on Israel:

> ... Saddam was trying to turn it into a holy war – a Jihad between the infidels and the Arab nations ... so it was very important that we exercised all possible pressure that we could on Israel to stay out of the conflict. We took a number of effective measures to contain the Scud threat. But I have no doubt that if one of those Scuds had landed in a city with a chemical warhead or had gone into a block of flats and ... killed 2 or 3 hundred Israelis then whatever the pressure Washington, and our own Prime Minister brought to bear would have not borne fruit and the Israelis would have entered the war.

Furthermore, although Sir Patrick Hine distinguished between the various members of the coalition, he also confirmed that Israel entering the war would have caused problems: 'I don't think Saudi Arabia would have dropped out of the coalition [but] I think it would have posed problems to other members of the coalition – certainly

Syria [and] perhaps Egypt ... it would have been undoubtedly a complicating factor'.[146]

By the beginning of February 1991 over 30,000 sorties had been flown, with the result that air superiority was achieved, and this supremacy was indicated by the sudden departure of a hundred Iraqi aircraft to Iran. There was no sign of halting the air campaign at this stage however, since the coalition members continued to stress that the Iraqi military capacity was vast and that it would be some time before it was sufficiently reduced to enable the coalition to conduct a ground attack. It was in this connection, therefore, that further evidence of co-operation between Britain and the US became apparent. The British Government readily agreed to a US request to temporarily base its B52 bombers at RAF Fairford so that missions to attack Iraqi targets with conventional munitions could be undertaken.[147]

Even though the US dwarfed the British military contribution to the coalition, British forces had other important attributes that were welcomed by the Americans. One such contribution was the airfield denial weapon better known as the JP233. Furthermore, as Keohane stated, the British government 'realised that the way to secure maximum influence in the US controlled operation was to contribute forces and weapons systems which matched those of the leading ally'.[148] This contributed to decisions to deploy weapon systems such as the JP233, MCMVs and heavy armour as indicated by the provision of Challenger tanks. In addition, the Royal Navy continued to fulfil its role by contributing to the enforcement of sanctions, keeping the shipping lanes free from mines and, once the war began, participating in the destruction of numerous Iraqi naval patrol crafts.

During the air campaign British ground forces continued to be brought up to their final strength of 45,000 in preparation for the invasion of Iraq and Kuwait. On 18 February British artillery was used for the first time in a limited engagement, the purpose of which was to prepare for the forthcoming ground campaign.[149] During the long air campaign the British Tornado GR1 alone flew over 1,500 offensive sorties against Iraqi targets, whereas the Jaguar flew more than 600. The combined coalition air assault on Iraqi military targets was so extensive that by the start of the land campaign on 24 February 1991 'the morale and determination of the Iraqi forces was either severely eroded or shattered'.[150] Consequently, the land campaign was short and decisive with the British 1st Armoured Division playing an important role, under the command of the 7th (US) Corps.

The ground attack deliberately began in the way that the Iraqis appeared to be expecting. As Air Chief Marshal Hine stated, 'Naval gunfire and amphibious feints from the Gulf, with frontal attacks through the defensive fortifications in southern Kuwait, were aimed at distracting Iraqi attention from the main thrust into eastern Iraq'.[151] The 1991 Defence White Paper and Air Chief Marshal Hine have provided useful descriptions of Britain's role during the brief ground campaign and therefore there is no intention to duplicate that here. Appendix 6, however, provides a useful impression of the 1st (British) Armoured Division's advance eastwards towards Kuwait City. As Appendix 6 shows, by the time President Bush announced the ceasefire on 28 February 1991, the Division had advanced over 300 kilometres to reach the Basra road in Kuwait. As Keohane states: 'Their success was in one sense demonstrated by taking 7,000 Iraqi prisoners of war and by the relatively low figure of 24 British military personnel losing their lives during the campaign...'[152]

During the air campaign a proposal was put forward by the Austrian Representative to the Security Council to hold meetings in private. The US and Britain readily supported this in view of the exceptional circumstances brought about by the war and stressed that the "closed door meetings" would encourage effective discussion in the Council by ensuring that no mixed signals were sent to Baghdad.[153] During these meetings the various representatives set out their objectives and war aims. As Pickering (the US Representative to the Security Council) stated: 'The objectives of the United States ... are clear and limited and are set out in the Security Council resolutions. They are the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait, the restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government and the restoration of international peace and security'. Furthermore Sir David Hannay (the British Representative) stated: '... we are not seeking to bring about the destruction, occupation or dismemberment of Iraq or to decide who governs that country. We are seeking the liberation of Kuwait, no more no less. The military action will end as soon as the objectives laid down by the Council have been achieved'.[154] Despite the closed nature of these meetings, the representatives failed to clarify what their post-war objectives were.

It was not until Kuwait had been liberated and the Security Council met to discuss the immediate post-war situation that the American Representative hinted at the destruction of Iraq's chemical and biological weapons programmes as a possible post-war objective. However, reference to this particular objective at this stage was brief and the meeting merely resulted in the adoption of SCR 686. This resolution

primarily dealt with issues concerning the immediate post-war period and referred to matters such as prisoners of war, the location of mines in Iraq and Kuwait, Iraq's implementation of past resolutions, and the release of all third-country nationals.[155]

However, one brief statement by Pickering seemed to reveal the US's ultimate objectives, as he commented that 'Iraq must assist the coalition in identifying the location of mines, booby traps, chemical and biological weapons...'.[156] As the section above on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (see Section 4.2.2) showed, the British Government had also admitted at various stages during the crisis that the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction was a coalition objective. The latest statement confirming this was made by John Major after the liberation of Kuwait on 28 February 1991. He stated 'Through the United Nations, we shall ... seek a commitment from Iraq to destroy, under international supervision, all its ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction, and not to acquire such weapons in the future'.[157]

The effect of this broadening of coalition objectives (referred to earlier – see endnotes 95 - 100) had important implications for the maintenance of a presence in the region. Numerous statements by British politicians had confirmed that their objectives were merely those set out in the UN resolutions; namely the liberation of Kuwait, the restoration of its legitimate government and the restoration of peace and security in the region (see Sir David Hannay's statement above at endnote 145). Such statements, combined with the fact that Iraq had suffered an overwhelming military defeat, suggested that the coalition members would withdraw from the region. However, the final objective, the restoration of peace and security in the region, became subject to a degree of ambiguity based upon the premise that Saddam Hussein's leadership was a source of instability and, therefore, security of the region became linked to his removal.

Hence the question of why the coalition forces failed to proceed to Baghdad and remove Saddam Hussein emerges. The official Government position on this issue was based upon the argument that the international coalition could only remain united if the Security Council Resolutions (particularly SCRs 660, 661 and 678) were adhered to, 'precisely because they sought to reverse Iraq's aggression, and not go beyond that'. A Government statement confirmed that 'The coalition had no mandate to occupy Iraq or to remove the present regime. Such action might have broken the international consensus and involved the coalition in administering an occupied

country for an indefinite period'.[158] In Sir Patrick Hine's opinion Arab sensitivities were the prime factor behind the coalition's decision not to remove Saddam Hussein. As he stated, 'None of the Arab nations within the coalition set one foot inside Iraq. It was all done by Americans, British and the French. The Saudis may have been involved in attacks on airfields but they were not involved in any ground attack...they did not want any part of that and all the Arab forces went into Kuwait but none went on to Iraq'.[159]

In view of this, their reluctance to go on to remove Saddam Hussein is easy to understand. However, the fact that Britain and the US had begun to regard Saddam Hussein's regime as a destabilising factor in the region still needed to be addressed. It was on this basis, therefore, that the coalition, with Britain playing a leading role, adopted SCR 687, which established a most intrusive set of rules on Iraq, designed to continue as long as Saddam Hussein remained in power (see Appendix 4). The protection of Iraq's Kurdish population, the payment of reparations by Iraq to Kuwait and other States, and importantly the elimination of all its WMD programmes, meant that 'Iraq was still subject to the control and supervision of the United Nations and thus to the coalition'[160] through till the end of 1991.

**Section 4: The question of Iraq's WMD programmes and Britain's role**

Chapter 3 analysed the changing patterns of threats as perceived by the British Government during the period from the beginning of 1989 until August 1990. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, biological, chemical, and ballistic missiles (as a possible delivery system), amongst Third World States, including those in the Middle East, was established as one area for concern. For this reason, although the ceasefire resolution (SCR 687) dealt with a range of issues, this section concentrates in particular on the provisions that dealt with the elimination of Iraq's WMD programmes. The regime set up with the authority to eliminate these programmes was one of the most intrusive in history, and it is in this light that a number of implications concerning the question of a continuing British role in the region become apparent.

That Britain played a leading role in establishing the intrusive regime designed to destroy Iraq's weapons programmes is in no doubt. A March 1991 article in *The Times* indicated that the British Government was insisting, at the United Nations, that

a final end to hostilities in the Gulf should be conditional upon Iraq destroying its weapons of mass destruction. As the article stated: 'A provision seeking the elimination of Iraq's ballistic missiles and chemical and biological weapons is one of several points Britain is trying to insert in the next Security Council resolution'.[161] Furthermore, in the Government's own words, 'in shaping our policy towards the implementation of sanctions and ensuring the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, we must take full account of Saddam Hussein's despicable record. Following the end of hostilities, further Security Council resolutions, notably SCR 687, have set out strict terms with which Iraq must comply. We are determined to ensure those terms are implemented in full'.[162] Indeed, shortly after the adoption of the resolution Douglas Hurd confirmed to the House that Britain '...took a prominent part in the establishment, under Security Council resolution 687, of the Special Commission to ensure that Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and ballistic missile capabilities [were] destroyed'.[163]

During a personal interview Colonel Terence Taylor spoke of another factor which contributed to the high profile adopted by Britain with regard to the resolution:

> Well we played a ... prominent role in the adoption of that resolution, along with of course the Americans, but I do remember the UK and the US being prominent – but Russia was also prominent at that time – you must remember that was the time of euphoria at the end of the Cold War. When I say Russia was prominent, at that time there was no real policy making going on in Moscow ... so diplomats were almost free-wheeling at that stage [and] getting an agreement was practically easier than would otherwise have been ... with the Cold War coming to an end ... all sorts of things became possible which were not possible before and are not possible now. So the UK did play a prominent role and David Hannay, our Permanent Representative, was deeply involved in it and was a major part in brokering the words.[164]

Resolution 687 was adopted by the Security Council whilst acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, thus making the provisions mandatory. This meant that the Council was entitled to take appropriate action in order to enforce Iraqi compliance. The resolution banned Iraq's possession of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and all ballistic missiles with a range of over 150 kilometres.[165] The level of Council intrusiveness into Iraqi affairs was further demonstrated by the fact that the resolution also banned 'research and development, production, use, testing, support, repair and maintenance of such weapons, their delivery means, all sub-components and associated equipment' (see Appendix 4).[166] In order to fulfil the objectives of SCR

687 the Council established the United Nations Special Commission (UNSC) and charged it with the task of dismantling Iraq's WMD programmes. Paragraph 11 of the resolution referred specifically to Iraq's nuclear programme and the task of ensuring its compliance with the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (of which Iraq was a signatory) was given to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

In order to facilitate these tasks, the resolution also requested that the UN Secretary-General should develop a plan for the future ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq's compliance with the provisions. This in itself demonstrates that Iraq was to remain subject to UN (and coalition) control even after its weapons programmes were dismantled. In his report of 17 May 1991, the Secretary-General highlighted that a three-stage implementation process would be necessary. This would involve the gathering and assessment of information, the disposal of weapons and facilities, and finally the monitoring and verification of Iraq's compliance in future.[167]

The first stage of the implementation process, the gathering and assessment of information, was critical for the success of the entire operation. In order to fulfil this role, very close co-operation by Iraqi authorities was necessary, so one of the provisions of SCR 687 was that Iraq, soon after the adoption of the resolution, should submit to the council a detailed declaration of all the items specified in paragraphs 8-12 of the resolution. This factor is of particular importance, since Iraq's subsequent non-compliance and attempts to block the UNSC's and IAEA's operations meant that the United Nations, and ultimately coalition members including British personnel, remained in the region in order to fulfil their role of dismantling Iraq's programmes. As Colonel Taylor stated:

> when Iraq was required under 687 to give its declarations – it said we have no NB programmes, we have a limited chemical programme and here's a bit of it, and we have a few missiles and here's a bit of that, and this was supposed to be a full and final declaration. This was totally inadequate. If they had made a mildly credible declaration it would have been over in a year or two. They thought, rather naively, that they could hide their nuclear programme, which was found very quickly.[168]

During a personal interview David Kay (at the time of interviewing the Secretary General of the Uranium Institute in London who had also been an inspector attached to UNSCOM), supported the view that Iraq's initial declaration to the Special Commission and the IAEA had been flawed. As regards their nuclear weapons, for example, the Iraqis claimed that they had no prohibited items, but the Special

Commission and the IAEA knew this to be untrue because, as Kay stated, 'they had declared before the Gulf War some items which had been covered by 687 ... the same thing was true in chemical, missiles and biologicals.'[169] It was patently clear by June 1991 that Iraq was involved in nuclear deception and as Richardson, the UK's Permanent Representative stated at the time:

> 'This Council created the Special Commission and ... gave it a very specific mandate, which was to locate and destroy all Iraq's nuclear capable material, as well as its chemical and biological weapons, and all its ballistic missiles over a certain range ... In my delegation's view ... the message from this Council must be two-fold, that Iraq must never again obstruct the work of the Special Commission and of the IAEA, and secondly, that the Iraqi authorities at the highest appropriate level must be called upon to reaffirm their commitment to co-operate fully with the Special Commission and the IAEA, not just in word but deed'.[170]

As evidence has shown, Iraq's intransigent stance continued throughout 1991. Nevertheless, the IAEA and the Special Commission continued in their attempts to identify elements of the various programmes and during the 6th IAEA on-site inspection the team obtained conclusive evidence that Iraq had a programme for developing an implosion-type nuclear weapon.[171] The Commission achieved equal success in discovering and dismantling Iraq's chemical weapons. As David Kay stated:

> ... certainly the most complete destruction has been in the chemical side. The Iraqis had technically made some really stupid things with regard to chemical weapons – they had mixed cocktails of gases – chemicals that no-one has ever done and there is nothing in the literature as to show the ways that the chemistries of these gases and liquids behave – so by the time the inspectors got there these things were starting to leak – they were terribly unstable and so the Iraqis declared an area called *Muthana* – and it [had] tens of thousands of chemical weapons in the site ... I think what happened [was] that the Iraqis knew they couldn't hide them or move them and that they were more of a pain to them than anything else so they were turned over to the UN.[172]

It is beyond the remit of this thesis to analyse in detail the role of the Special Commission and the IAEA in dismantling Iraq's programmes of mass destruction. Detailed analysis has been conducted elsewhere.[173] However, the above points serve to highlight one very important factor, namely that Iraq refused on numerous occasions to co-operate with the demands of the Commission and the IAEA, thus failing to fulfil the provisions specified under Section C of SCR 687.

The Commission's inability to find Iraq's biological weapons programme seemed to confirm the perception that Iraq was involved in deception. Both David Kay and Colonel Taylor confirmed that locating this particular programme proved to be very difficult. As Kay stated: 'In the biological programme it's a big zero. We found nothing despite the fact of really good information that they had something. It is probably because the biological programme is easier to disguise [and] the inspections on the biological phase got started later'.[174] Furthermore as Colonel Taylor stated:

> On the biological side, although we had some information, which was quite hard, but no evidence and even within the Commission people began to doubt us – it took us nearly 4 years to find the evidence and we plugged away and eventually we managed to pierce the concealment plan but it took an enormous amount of effort ... We broke the case in March 1995 and our work finally bore fruit.[175]

From this it is possible to see that during the period in question (the end of 1991) the Commission remained unsuccessful, largely due to Iraqi deception, in locating the biological programme. This did not, however, lessen the coalition members' determination to ensure Iraqi compliance. Various Security Council Documents have highlighted the extent of this deception. Resolution 707, adopted on 15 August 1991, drew attention specifically to the question of Iraq's failure to comply with SCR 687 and demanded that Iraq 'provide a full, final and complete disclosure ... of all aspects of its programmes to develop weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometres ... [and] allow the Special Commission, the IAEA ... unconditional and unrestricted access to any and all areas, facilities, equipment, records, and means of transportation which they wish to inspect'.[176]

The British Representative highlighted the importance that the British Government placed on the work of the Special Commission and the IAEA during a speech made prior to the adoption of SCR 707:

> We believe it is vital that the Special Commission and the [IAEA] should have all the powers they need to carry out their duties under [SCR 687] ... Iraq [has failed] to carry out all its obligations, and this applies with particular force to the question of weapons of mass destruction ... We now have confirmation that there was indeed a super-gun project. We now have confirmation that Iraq did indeed have a biological warfare research programme with an offensive capability. We have confirmation that Iraq held much greater stocks of chemical weapons than it had previously admitted. And finally, we have confirmation that it had separated plutonium from enriched uranium ...

> in breach of ... the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, of which Iraq is a signatory.[177]

It was inevitable, therefore, that the coalition members would continue to support the Commission's mandate in Iraq. Indeed, as David Kay confirmed, the Security Council was closely involved with the Commission and further highlighted the central role played, in particular, by three of the permanent members, the US, Britain and France:

> ... overall during this initial period, really up to the end of 1991, the Secretary-General's office itself really didn't play a major role ... now it was probably because 687 [was] a unique resolution in the history of the Security Council in that it made the Special Commission a subsidiary organ of the Council, not the Secretariat and so this meant that the reporting linkage between the Council and the Special Commission was very direct.

Furthermore,

> The US and the British were prepared to make the Special Commission authoritative for all areas and at most agreed that with regard to nuclear weapons the IAEA could provide, on request, special assistance and co-operation where necessary ... [and although] there was a flow of information between the P5 ... you're really talking about the P3 – the Chinese never shared anything ... [and] the Russians too very seldom came forward with any information.[178]

The importance that the UK attached to the Special Commission's functions was further indicated by the extensive degree of assistance provided. The Ministry of Defence provided significant technical equipment to aid the Commission's work and out of the 19 UNSCOM missions in Iraq during 1991, the British Government provided military and civilian experts for 16. In addition the Government made available over £1 million during this initial period to pay for the provision of the practical support.[179]

Ultimately Iraqi intransigence and non-co-operation meant that the Special Commission had to continue its activities in Iraq far beyond 1991. Indeed, as Colonel Taylor confirmed, the first two stages, namely, gathering and assessing information and the disposal of weapons and facilities were still continuing in 1998.[180] Work for the third stage, that of establishing a regime for ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraqi compliance began in 1991, with the Secretary-General presenting a plan for this stage in August 1991. This envisaged the establishment of a regime to ensure that Iraq complied with '...its unconditional obligation not to use, retain, possess, develop, construct or otherwise acquire weapons or related items prohibited ... under Section C

of SCR 687'. In the event of a discovery of Iraqi non-compliance the Special Commission would also have the 'right to call upon Iraq to halt the activity and to prevent its recurrence ...[and that] findings by the Special Commission that indicate[d] that Iraq [was] not in compliance with its obligations ...[would] be brought to the attention of the Security Council'.[181]

The Security Council subsequently approved this plan on 11 October 1991 with the adoption of SCR 715. This particular resolution re-confirmed Iraq's obligations under Section C of SCR 687 and specified that the Special Commission would have specific rights to carry out its future monitoring and verification activities (see Appendix 7). Appendix 7 also demonstrates that the provisions set out under the Secretary-General's plan for the third stage, namely the future monitoring and verification, were envisaged to be as intrusive as the activities during the first two stages. This meant that long after the Special Commission had satisfied itself that Iraq's weapons programmes had been dismantled, Iraq would continue to be subject to control by the UN and ultimately the coalition. Indeed, up until the end of 1991, namely the period being analysed here, Iraq continued to be subject to one of the most intrusive regimes ever established in the field of arms control and, as has been shown, the British government had constructed a perception that Iraq's weapons could constitute a continuing threat and this perhaps contributed to the decision to ensure that British personnel continued to play a role in UNSCOM.

**Section 5: Britain's economic interests**

Chapter 2 examined the extent of Britain's economic interests in the GCC States during the period 1980-1988 and chapter 3 extended this analysis up to the moment of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The analysis in these two chapters showed that there was indeed a bias towards economic factors within the discourse of the era and that during the 1980s Britain did actively seek to develop markets for its exports (including importantly, defence markets) among the various GCC States. The chapters also raised the question of whether British foreign policy was largely shaped by economics or whether the discourse has revealed alternative or multiple explanations. Thus far this chapter has considered some reasons behind Britain's involvement in the Gulf since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and has shown it is not possible to conclude that economics shaped foreign policy. Rather it appears that British foreign

policy towards the region can be explained in light of multiple factors, all of which will be brought together in the conclusion. British engagement in the region was also manifest in different forms, ranging from the diplomatic to the political and military. Section 4.4 then extended the analysis till the end of 1991 and highlighted continuing British interest in the work of the Special Commission in dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. This final section will now re-examine Britain's economic interests in the region and demonstrate that markets and other economic factors still feature prominently in the discourse during this period.

The end of the Cold War brought with it the notion that major military markets would begin to erode as Britain, along with other nations, sought to cash in on the so-called "peace-dividend". Concern over weakening NATO markets, however, was offset by the belief that there would be a growth in the Middle East (and Far East) where British Aerospace Defence Systems (in particular) – now comprising British Aerospace (military aircraft), British Aerospace (Dynamics) and Royal Ordnance – had a vigorous presence.[182]

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 reinforced this view, as it was believed that the crisis could improve the prospects for British defence sales to the GCC States, particularly in light of the crucial *Al Yamamah* deal with Saudi Arabia. Negotiated between 1985 and 1988, with Mrs. Thatcher playing a leading role, phase 1 of the contract had not only secured thousands of jobs in British Aerospace and other smaller defence companies but had also proved to be very lucrative financially (see chapter 2).[183] Phase 2 of the contract had been due to start in 1988, but had been postponed by Saudi Arabia because of problems in keeping up with payments. The crisis in August 1990, however, led to the belief that with the embargo on Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil and the rise in oil prices due to the crisis, more money would be available to Saudi Arabia for weapons procurement.[184] Similarly, it was believed that the other Gulf States, fearful of further Iraqi aggression, would also seek to upgrade their own armed forces.

Issues highlighted in chapter 2 were also relevant during this period, one of which was the competition between Western States. The Bush Administration's plan to sell up to $23 billion worth of arms to Saudi Arabia had the potential, by threatening the successful conclusion of phase 2 of the *Al Yamamah* deal, to replace Britain as Saudi Arabia's leading arms supplier. Indeed, in an attempt to secure the contract the Bush Administration went so far as to relax the limits on the number of F-

15s that Saudi Arabia could possess at any one time. The proposed US sale was to include F-15s, 400 M1 Tanks, 500 Bradley APCs, Patriot air defence systems, Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, thousands of lorries and jeeps, tonnes of ammunition and various construction and maintenance projects.[185] In the event the Administration was faced, once again, with opposition from Israel and the powerful Jewish Lobby. Fearful of a divisive political conflict in the middle of the Gulf crisis, the Bush Administration capitulated and subsequently revised its offer to just over $3 billion worth of equipment.[186]

The American commitment to Desert Shield in support of Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States was a cause for concern both to the British Government and the defence industry. As Cook claimed, the British concern was that, despite being unwilling to rely solely on one nation for its defence needs, there was a possibility that the Saudi Government might turn to the US in light of its massive contribution to the defence effort. Had this been the case, lucrative Anglo-Saudi defence contracts such as *Al Yamamah*, already on hold, might have been cancelled in favour of new supplies from the US. Could it be argued, therefore, as Cook argues, that this concern, namely to protect future defence (and other) markets in Saudi Arabia and other GCC States, was a contributory factor influencing the subsequent British decision to despatch troops and equipment to the region?[187]

The British decision to play a major role in the coalition did ultimately bring rewards, as it became apparent by the end of 1991 that phase 2 of *Al Yamamah* was progressing, with negotiations over questions such as types of equipment, payment and delivery times. The order was expected to be placed over a five-year period and to amount to over £10 billion. The latest contracts were expected to include the sale of up to 48 Tornados, 60 Hawk jet fighters, 40 Black Hawk Westland helicopters, 6 minesweepers, air-to-air missiles and British involvement in the construction of a new airbase.[188]

This agreement with the Saudis was secured despite attempts by the permanent members of the Security Council to initiate talks on limiting arms to the Middle East after the Gulf War. The establishment of a United Nations arms register appeared to indicate that more open international dialogue was being promoted and that limits might finally be imposed on the arms trade. However, negotiations between the primary arms suppliers (who also happened to be the permanent Security Council members) collapsed following the US sale of F-15s to Saudi Arabia. Similarly, the

second phase of *Al Yamamah* was finalised by John Major himself during a visit to the Far East and Persian Gulf early in 1993. As Hartung claims, both the US and British sales were economically motivated; indeed, in the British case, they were 'sold to the ... public as economic windfalls that would save 19,000 jobs at ... British Aerospace ... and an additional 1,800 jobs at the Vickers plants in Leeds and Newcastle'.[189] Hartung went on to claim that the latest deal with Saudi Arabia was not viewed as a short-term measure but rather as part of a long-term strategy: 'British officials have revealed that Major closed the deal with the Saudis in part by dangling a promise of access to the next generation of European combat aircraft, the Eurofighter 2000, when it comes into production at the end of the decade'. Gribben also claimed that this phase of the deal was expected to maintain BAe's income from Saudi Arabia at about £2 billion a year into the next century and strengthen Britain's military links with the Kingdom and the region as a whole.[190]

In addition to the continuing negotiations with Saudi Arabia BAe, other British defence companies and British politicians were closely involved in attempting to secure defence (and other) contracts with the other GCC States. Companies such as Vickers, confident of the performance of the Challenger 2 tank during the Gulf War, competed with the American Abrams for contracts in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.[191] Although the Kuwaitis finally chose the American Abrams over the Challenger 2, this is another example of the importance which the British placed on defence orders from the region. Indeed, Vickers succeeded in supplying the tank to Oman, which placed an order for 18 with an option for 18 more. The company also succeeded in securing a contract to supply over 250 Challenger 2 tanks to Saudi Arabia as part of the *Al Yamamah* deal.[192]

Even though the British lost the Kuwaiti tank order, it was apparent that Kuwait, in light of its recent Iraqi experience, was proposing to spend more than $10 billion on arms procurement over the next decade. Contracts such as the supply of more than 200 Warrior armoured fighting vehicles by the British engineering group GKN showed that the Government continued to actively encourage the sale of defence equipment to the region.[193]

Other notable contract negotiations during this period included Vosper's coup in securing the largest sale of warships for more than twenty years when Oman placed an order for two corvettes at the end of 1991. The order was deemed to be of vital importance for Vosper Thornycroft since the Royal Navy had recently postponed

orders for seven minehunters. The sale of the corvettes to Oman and the supply of minehunters to Saudi Arabia (part of *Al Yamamah*) were both required by Vosper to bridge the gap before further Royal Navy orders emerged. This shows how important the Gulf markets remained for various segments of British defence industry.[194]

This section has demonstrated that any concerns that the end of the Cold War would erode military markets were unfounded. The GCC markets, for instance, remained buoyant and, as the discourse analysed in this section has shown, continued to benefit numerous segments of the British defence industry. The information presented here is important in the context of the statement of hypothesis established in chapter 1 which stated that Thatcherism, with its emphasis on economics and interests, provided a framework for British foreign policy towards the GCC States. In light of this, therefore, it is possible to assert that British interests in the GCC States, as highlighted in government discourse, and the ideational basis of Thatcherism are mutually constitutive. Linked to this is the perception that Britain's interests in the region may have been presented as a rationale for Britain's decision to go to war.

**Conclusion**

The material presented in this chapter is of particular importance given Britain's desire to play a leading role following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. The international response to the invasion was subject to US leadership both diplomatically and militarily. However, this chapter has deliberately shifted the focus of analysis to Britain and consequently there are a number of questions which emerge from analysing the discourse of this particular period. What conclusions can be drawn about British involvement during the crisis? What light does the analysis throw on the factors which influenced British policy during this period? And finally can anything be said about the constructivist approach, given that the analytical process is complete?

Taking the final question first, the constructivist method adopted for this thesis has revealed a number of factors which feature sufficiently prominently in the discourse to suggest that they may have been influential in British policy-making. The very existence of such a variety of possible explanations would seem to throw into question the validity of the hypothesis.

Analysis of all the relevant periods has shown that the British government regarded the Gulf region as important, as have numerous statements by politicians such as Sir Richard Luce and comments by Lord Hurd and Sir Alan Munro. Both Lord Hurd and Sir Alan Munro went so far as to say that the Conservative government accorded greater importance to the region than the previous Labour government had. The possible reasons for this importance must therefore be examined. If one is to conclude that the region was crucial due to Britain's economic interests in the GCC States then the hypothesis remains valid. However, this position would ignore for instance, Mrs. Thatcher's personal image of the international system to which Iraq's invasion of Kuwait seemed to conform. This chapter has shown that the British government attempted to play a leading role in the diplomatic process aimed at forcing Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. In light of this, therefore, could one argue that the crisis provided a rationale for Mrs. Thatcher to play a "warrior role", and construct the perception that despite being relegated to a power of the second rank Britain was still able to play an international role.

The case study has shown that elements within government discourse have pointed to the geo-strategic importance of the region based on, for instance, Britain's continuing reliance on GCC crude oil. The question that needs to be asked is to what extent the British government considered it as a threat if Saddam Hussein had been allowed to remain in Kuwait, especially in light of the possibility that Iraq would then have had access to Kuwait's vast oil reserves and enormous overseas (including British) financial investments. Sir Alan Parsons, for instance, claimed that Saddam Hussein would have been able to open up an alternative route to the Gulf by by-passing the *Shatt-al Arab* and rendering irrelevant the question of whether it should be controlled by Iran or Iraq. Did the British government therefore perhaps see the invasion of Kuwait as a first step in an attempt to control the rich Arab States? Furthermore, the location of the Gulf region on the southern flank of NATO led to the possibility that a crisis there could have had destabilising effects on southern NATO States. Despite falling defence budgets, as this chapter has shown, numerous Command Papers argued that British defence planning had to take into consideration continuing uncertainties, such as any danger arising from instability in the Soviet Union and also the need to respond to threats to British interests outside the NATO area.

The chapter has also shown that it is possible that the British government felt it had a historical commitment to the Gulf States as demonstrated through the longstanding Treaties of Friendship (see Appendix 1). Related to this was the view that the GCC States were perhaps beginning to be viewed as important for Britain's European partners as well. This was indicated by the developing negotiations between the EC and GCC over the establishment of a free trade agreement.

Numerous elements in the discourse have also pointed to Britain's interest in the newly strengthened United Nations as another factor that may have influenced British policy. There was the perception that the United Nations had finally succeeded in presenting a unified front to the international community. Its first real test in the post-Cold War period was therefore crucial if it was to retain any degree of credibility and as a permanent member of the Security Council it may be supposed that contributing to this would have been in Britain's interests. Related to this issue was the possibility that British threat perceptions had altered in light of the improvement in relations between Western States and the Soviet Union. With the Soviet Union increasingly willing to co-operate, Britain was able to play a more prominent role in international affairs, including in particular the United Nations. Both Nicholls and Keohane have been quoted in the chapter as supporting the view that the crisis provided Britain with the opportunity to play an important role in the revived United Nations, thereby ensuring that it was well placed to strengthen its own position as a permanent member of the Security Council. In his comments on the role of the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Nicholls stressed some variation in possible reasons for British action, since the MOD saw the war as a way of alleviating the detrimental effects on the British military brought about by the Options for Change process whereas the FCO was particularly keen to play a more prominent role in the United Nations.

Although the thesis has acknowledged that the primary actor in the Persian Gulf during the period 1979-1991 was the US it has nevertheless provided a powerful argument stressing that the British also attempted to play a major role in the region. It is in this light, therefore, that an analysis of Britain's military relationship with the United States vis-à-vis the Gulf War must be viewed. The British Government remained mindful of the so-called "special relationship" and sought to enhance it. However, could it be argued that Britain felt that there was a need to retain a voice over the deployment of their own troops in what had rapidly become a US-led

military operation? Did the way in which the 1st (BR) Armoured Division was formed demonstrate the importance that the British Government attached to its desire to retain some degree of independence within an American led operation? And if so, was this desire to appear independent an attempt to appeal to the GCC's concerns of over-reliance on the US? None of these questions can be answered definitively, however; they all feature in the discourse and therefore feed into a general interpretation of factors which may have had some influence on British foreign policy towards the region.

Discourse has also shown that the British government was concerned with the possibility that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction posed a threat to the general stability of the region. As has been demonstrated, for instance, the government was aware that Iraq had used chemical weapons in the past and believed that it continued to develop and store them. This issue was dealt with in chapter 3 but analysed here in the context of the role played by Britain in the adoption of Section C of Resolution 687. In light of intelligence briefings, and the fact that Iraq had used chemical weapons, it appears that the British Government had already begun to regard Iraq as a threat to the stability of the region. One factor which has featured in statements by numerous politicians, including Tom King and Douglas Hurd (during his interview) has been Britain's desire to ensure that once removed from Kuwait, Iraq should not be allowed to reconstitute its various weapons programmes. Mrs. Thatcher's own statement on 7 November 1990: 'Britain and others have argued that Iraq's chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons capability must be eliminated', amongst statements by other politicians such as Hurd, also indicate this direction in British policy.

Attention was also focused on the question of Britain's military presence in the Persian Gulf during this period. Britain's military contribution, although dwarfed by the US, was nevertheless significant at around 45,000 tri-service personnel and large quantities of equipment. This was a sizeable contribution and itself seems to demonstrate that the Government perceived vital interests, whether economic, strengthening the special relationship, or dismantling Iraq's weapons programmes, to be at stake. The various factors identified in this chapter seem to therefore invalidate the hypothesis to some extent.

However, the chapter has also conducted an analysis of post-war defence sales to the GCC States and has demonstrated that the government discourse continued to be concerned with the search for and maintenance of markets for British defence

products. The search for defence contracts amongst these States showed that military co-operation between allies on the ground had quickly transformed into intense economic competition as the US, Britain and France took advantage of GCC fears for their own security. The Anglo-Saudi *Al Yamamah* deal and the US F-15 sale to Saudi Arabia were just two examples which epitomised the view that, despite attempts to curb arms sales to the region, economic interests cannot be discounted in the search for explanations for British foreign policy. What this means for the hypothesis and the general question on the factors influencing British policy and the role played by constructivism in the analysis is now the subject of the final conclusion.

## Notes

1 General Sir Peter de la Billière, 'The Gulf conflict: planning and execution', *The Rusi Journal*, vol.136, no.4, Winter 1991, p.1.

2 See statement by Douglas Hurd, the then Foreign Secretary in *Hansard*, vol.178, 'Middle East', 24 October 1990, column 340.

3 British protection of Kuwait was to cease in 1961 when Kuwait gained its independence. Shortly after this, however, Iraq laid claim to the emirate and amassed its troops on the border. In response Britain dispatched 8,000 troops to Kuwait to enable the newly independent state to withstand Iraqi pressure. Arab League troops soon replaced British troops, which were themselves later withdrawn in 1963 once Iraq formally recognised Kuwait's sovereignty and independence.

4 Theodoulou, Michael, 'Gulf tension rises after Iraq breaks off talks', *The Times*, 2 August 1990.

5 Simpson, J., *From the house of war*, London, Arrow Books Limited, 1991, p.80. Also see Theodoulou, *The Times*, 2 August 1990, op.cit. In addition, '[Iraq] ... insisted that there could be no progress until Kuwait accepted Baghdad's charges that it had glutted the oil market and stolen oil worth $2.4 billion ... from a disputed field straddling their joint border'.

6 'The Gulf crisis', *Memorandum submitted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the Foreign Affairs Committee, GF 79*. For a detailed account of the Gulf crisis see Dannreuther, Dann, 'The Gulf conflict: a political and strategic analysis', *Adelphi Papers 264*, Winter 1991/92. Also see Cooley, John K., 'Pre-war Gulf diplomacy', *Survival*, vol.xxxiii, no.2, March/April 1991, pp.125-127.

7 Badsey, S., and Pimlott, J., (ed.), *The Gulf War assessed*, London, Arms and Armour Press, 1992, pp.35-37. Also see 'Iraq: bidding for regional superpower status', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, vol.14, no.5, 4 August 1990, p.159. This article confirmed Iraq's condemnation of Kuwait and the UAE over their oil pricing policies. However, the article claimed that the build-up of Iraq's military forces in Kuwait and the strength of its verbal attacks on the Emirate suggested deeper political motives. Indications were that Saddam Hussein had ambitions to dominate the Middle East. Furthermore, the article also confirmed that the military strength of the GCC States was no match for the Iraqi Armed Forces which contained almost a million battle-hardened men, 5000 MBTs, an airforce of over 600 aircraft, a wide spread of missile forces based on modified Soviet Scud-Bs, proven chemical weapons use and a suspect nuclear weapons programme.

[8] *Personal interview with Group Captain A.P.N. Lambert*, who was at the time of interviewing Director of Defence Studies at the Royal Air Force Staff College, Bracknell. Also see Bolton, David, 'Did Saddam want war?', *The Rusi Journal*, Spring 1991.

[9] A May 1991 report in the *Middle East Economic Digest*, while failing to consider Britain's prominent role in the Persian Gulf during the first two Thatcher terms, does support the view that Britain was once again playing an important view in the region. See 'Special Report on Britain', *Middle East Economic Digest*, 31 May 1991, p.7.

[10] Keohane, D., 'British policy in the conflict', in *International perspectives on the Gulf crisis: 1990-91*', Alex Danchev and Dan Keohane (eds.), Oxford, St. Martin's Press, 1994, p.150.

[11] *Personal interview with Group Captain A.P.N. Lambert.*

[12] 'Inquiry in events in the Middle East', *Memorandum submitted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the Foreign Affairs Committee, (ME 06)*, 16 January 1991.

[13] Parsons, Sir Anthony, 'Sanctions are the world's only answer to Saddam', *The Times*, 3 August 1990. Sir Anthony Parsons has had a distinguished career in the British diplomatic service and served as Ambassador to Iran, as the Permanent Representative to the UN and as advisor to Mrs. Thatcher on Foreign Affairs.

[14] *Personal interview with Group Captain A.P.N. Lambert.*

[15] 'The Government's expenditure plans 1991/92 to 1993/94, Ministry of Defence', *Command Paper 1501*, February 1991.

[16] *Personal interview with Group Captain A.P.N. Lambert.*

[17] *Hansard*, vol.176, 'EC-Gulf trade', 17 July 1990, column 531.

[18] Statement by William Waldegrave (the then Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs), in *Hansard*, vol.176, 'Gulf Co-operation Council', 17 July 1990, columns 496-497.

[19] Freedman, L., and Karsh, E., *The Gulf conflict, 1990-1991: diplomacy and war in the new world order*, London, Faber and Faber, 1993, p.68.

[20] Appendix 2, however, contains a list with brief explanations, for reference, of the relevant resolutions adopted by the Security Council.

[21] Statement by Mrs. Thatcher in *Hansard*, 'The Gulf', vol.177, 6 September 1990, column 734. Also see Stothard, Peter and Bremner, Charles, 'Thatcher urges UN to act tough', *The Times*, 3 August 1990.

[22] Keohane, op.cit., p.157.

[23] *Security Council Document, S/PV.2932*, 2 August 1990, p.19. This particular Security Council meeting resulted in the unanimous acceptance of resolution 660 – which was co-sponsored by the UK. Out of the 15 Council Members 14 voted in favour of the resolution, only Yemen did not participate and there were no abstentions.

[24] Ibid., p.21.

[25] *Security Council Document, S/PV.2933*, 6 August 1990. Resolution 661 was adopted with 13 Members voting in favour, none against and 2 abstentions.

[26] For an account of Mrs. Thatcher's trip to the US see Stothard, Peter and Bremner, Charles, 'Thatcher urges UN to act tough', *The Times*, op.cit.

[27] Statement by Mrs. Thatcher in *Hansard*, vol.177, 'The Gulf', 6 September 1990, op.cit., column 735.

[28] 'Saddam's naked villainy', *The Times*, 3 August 1990.

[29] 'Letter ... from the Permanent Representative of Qatar ... to the Secretary-General', *Security Council Document, S/21434*, 3 August 1990.

[30] 'Letter ... from the Permanent Representative of Oman ... to the Secretary-General', *Security Council Document, S/21468*, 8 August 1990. The Final Communiqué issued at the meeting condemned the Iraqi invasion as a '...flagrant violation of the sovereignty and independence

of a State member of the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, of the League of Arab States and of the United Nations ... and further placed on record its support for Kuwait and its endorsement of Kuwaiti legitimacy'.

31 'Letter ... from ... Egypt, Saudi Arabia and [Syria] ... to the Secretary-General', *Security Council Document, S/22066*, 11 January 1991. For further evidence of Saudi Arabian, other GCC, and Egyptian support for international resolutions against Iraq see Security Council Document S/PV.2960, 27 November 1990. The Egyptian Representative quoted President Mubarak as stating 'We totally reject the present state of occupation and oppression. The only feasible solution is complete Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and the return of the legitimate Government of Kuwait'.

32 Statement by Mrs. Thatcher in *Hansard*, 'The Gulf', vol.177, 6 September 1990, op.cit., column 734.

33 Statement by Douglas Hurd (the then Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) in *Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 1990-91, Third Report, Examination of Witnesses*, 24 October 1990, p.35.

34 'Defence implications of recent events', *Defence Committee, Tenth Report, Session 1989-90*, 11 July 1990, pp.v-x.

35 Ibid., p.ix. For further evidence see also Tom King's (the then Secretary of State for Defence) statements in *Hansard*, vol.174, 'Defence estimates 1990', 18 June 1990, columns 688-692.

36 Statement by William Waldegrave (the then Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs), in *Hansard*, vol.176, 'British-Soviet relations', 11 July 1990, columns 306-307. Also see *Hansard*, vol.176, 'Economic Summit (Houston)', 12 July 1990, columns 453-469 and 'NATO Summit', 17 July 1990, columns 844–845.

37 See statements by Mrs. Thatcher in *Hansard*, vol.181, 'CSCE Summit', 21 November 1990, column 292.

38 Waldegrave in *Hansard*, vol.176, op.cit.

39 Statement by Mrs. Thatcher in *Hansard*, vol.177, 'The Gulf', 6 September 1990, op.cit., column 741.

40 Statement by Mr. Lozinsky, Soviet Representative to the Security Council in *Security Council Document S/PV.2932*, 2 August 1990, p.23.

41 *Personal interview with David Nicholls*, Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Policy) between 1984 and 1989.

42 *Personal interview with David Nicholls*, Idem.

43 Keohane, op.cit., p.168.

44 See statements by Prime Minister (John Major) in *Hansard*, vol.183, 'The Gulf', 15 January 1991, column 738. The aspect of the French proposal which caused the greatest controversy was the connection of an Iraqi withdrawal to an international conference on the Palestine problem. The British and the Americans, however, were emphatic in their insistence that there could be no linkage between Kuwait and Palestine.

45 Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council stated on 15 February 1991 that it was ready to deal with Security Council Resolution 660. However, the Iraqi announcement had the following conditions attached.

- The withdrawal of Israel from Arab territory
- The withdrawal of coalition troops from the Gulf region within 1 month
- Reparations for damages inflicted on Iraq
- The cancellation of all of Iraq's debts
- The repeal of all Security Council Resolutions passed after the invasion of Kuwait
- Guarantees of Iraq's territorial claims
- It refused to agree to the return of the Government of Kuwait
- It demanded a determining voice in dealing with the wealth of the region

[46] Statement by Sir David Hannay (the then UK Representative to the Security Council) in *Security Council Document, S/PV.2977 (Part II) (Closed-resumption 2)*, 16 February 1991, p.261. As can be seen from this source, this particular meeting was held behind closed doors and not in the public domain.

[47] Statement by Douglas Hurd in *Hansard*, vol.186, 'The Gulf', 18 February 1991, column 19. Mr. Hurd was also to confirm that the Iraqi announcement was rejected during a meeting held between the Foreign Ministers of the leading Arab members of the coalition.

[48] 'The international community rejects compromise', *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Briefing Note*, November 1990. For a general account on the issue of linking the Israeli/ Palestinian issue with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait see Cromwell, William C., 'Europe, the United States and the pre-war Gulf crisis', *International Journal*, no.xlviii, Winter 1992-3, pp.133-137.

[49] Statement by Douglas Hurd in *Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 1990-91, Third Report, Examination of Witnesses*, op.cit., p.48.

[50] Ibid., p.36.

[51] 'Letter ... from ... Egypt, Saudi Arabia and [Syria] ... to the Secretary-General', *Security Council Document, S/22066*, op.cit., 11 January 1991.

[52] See statement by Mrs. Thatcher in *Hansard*, vol.177, 'The Gulf', 6 September 1990, op.cit., column 736.

[53] Statement by Douglas Hurd in *Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 1990-91, Third Report, Examination of Witnesses*, op.cit., p.34.

[54] For further details see *Hansard*, vol.177, 'The Gulf', 6 September 1990, op.cit., column 736.

[55] See 'Effects of UN sanctions on the Iraqi economy', *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Briefing Note*, November 1990. The Foreign Office Note went on to give a detailed account of the possible effects of sanctions on the Iraqi economy. Also see 'Iraq: the wasted potential', *'Foreign and Commonwealth Office Briefing Note*, December 1990.

[56] See *Security Council Document, S/PV.2938*, 25 August 1990, p.29. Resolution 665 was adopted with 13 votes in favour, none against, and 2 abstentions.

[57] See *Security Council Document S/PV.2943*, 25 September 1990, p.25.

[58] *Security Council Document S/PV.2938*, 25 August 1990, op.cit., p.26. Dannreuther referred to SCR 665 as 'a crucial turning point in the consolidation of the international coalition. It not only represented the final link in the isolation of Iraq, but also gave the most dramatic demonstration of UN solidarity'. Dannreuther, op.cit., p.30.

[59] Ibid., pp.47-48.

[60] Statement by Douglas Hurd in the Security Council. See *Security Council Document, S/PV.2943*, 25 September 1990, op.cit., pp.39-40.

[61] Statement by Mrs. Thatcher, in *Hansard*, vol.177, 6 September 1990, op.cit., column 743.

[62] For more details see 'Why sanctions could not be given more time', *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Briefing Note*, January 1991.

[63] Statement by Douglas Hurd in *Hansard*, vol.182, 'The Gulf', 11 December 1990, column 825.

[64] See *Hansard*, vol.182, 'Gulf hostages', 6 December 1990, column 469. Here Hurd provided a breakdown: namely that there were 440 British nationals still hiding in Kuwait, 355 in Iraq and a further 342 were detained at 'strategic sites'.

[65] See Hurd's statement in *Hansard*, vol.182, 'The Gulf', 11 December 1990, op.cit., columns 822-823.

[66] See statement by Douglas Hurd in *Hansard*, vol.178, 'Middle East', 24 October 1990, column 336.

[67] See statements by Mrs. Thatcher in *Hansard*, vol.180, 'Debate on the Address', 7 November 1990, column 34.

[68] See Sir David Hannay's statements in *Security Council Document S/PV.2951*, 29 October 1990, pp.92-93.

[69] Statement by Douglas Hurd in *Hansard*, vol.182, 'The Gulf', 11 December 1990, op.cit., column 829. In this statement Hurd was referring specifically to SCR 678 which had been adopted by the Security Council on 29 November 1990 and authorised Members to use "all necessary means" to remove Iraq from Kuwait.

[70] Ibid., column 826.

[71] See 'Why sanctions could not be given more time', *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Briefing Note*, January 1991, op.cit.

[72] See statements by Douglas Hurd in *Hansard*, vol.183, 'The Gulf', 15 January 1991, column 818.

[73] Statement by Hurd in Idem.

[74] See statement by Douglas Hogg (the then Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) in Ibid., columns 411-413. Also see his statements in *Hansard*, vol.181, 20 November 1990, column 81 where he stated '... the international embargo continues to be broadly effective. Iraq's access to foreign exchange has been drastically reduced ... manufacturing and industrial capabilities have been especially affected. Food rationing has been introduced. However, on the evidence available, sanctions alone are unlikely to be decisive in reversing Iraqi policy in the near future'.

[75] 'Letter dated 17 January 1991 from ... [the USA] ... to the President of the Security Council', *Security Council Document, S/22090*.

[76] Keohane, op.cit., p.153.

[77] Statement by Neil Kinnock (the then Leader of the Labour Party) in *Hansard*, vol.177, 'The Gulf', 6 September 1990, column 743.

[78] Statement by Denis Healey in Ibid., column 761. Statements by other senior Members also reflected a high degree of consensus in the House. As Paddy Ashdown stated: 'My Party joins all the other parties in the House in expressing an implacable determination to ensure that Saddam Hussein is defeated in this aggression. The Prime Minister is right: there can be no compromises on the terms of the United Nations resolutions that Saddam Hussein's troops must unconditionally withdraw from Kuwait, that Kuwait must be returned to its legitimate government'.

[79] Statement by Tom King in *Hansard*, vol.182, 'The Gulf', 11 December 1990, column 907.

[80] For more details on proponents of the no-war approach see *Hansard*, vol.183, 'Middle East', 19 December 1990, columns 399-407 and columns 496-500.

[81] Keohane, op.cit., p.153.

[82] Statement by Douglas Hogg in *Hansard*, vol.183, 'Middle East', 19 December 1990, op.cit., columns 508-509.

[83] See statements by Tom King in *Hansard*, vol.182, 'The Gulf', 11 December 1990, op.cit., column 907.

[84] Statement by John Major in *Hansard*, vol.183, 'The Gulf', 15 January 1990, columns 735-736. The Prime Minister went on to state that Iraq's declared reasons for invading Kuwait had also varied significantly ranging from Kuwait failing to pay compensation to Iraq for lost revenues, because it had occupied territory on the border, that it had appealed for Iraqi assistance in the face of a *coup d'etat*, that Kuwait had posed a threat to the security of Iraq, and that the invasion had taken place to bring about a peaceful settlement to the Palestinian question. After citing this list John Major went on to state, 'Rarely in history can there have been a more cynical catalogue of lies and deceits'.

[85] Statement by John Major in Ibid., p.737.

[86] Statement by Neil Kinnock in *Hansard*, vol.183, 'The Gulf', 15 January 1990, columns 743-744.

[87] Keohane, op.cit., p.159.

[88] Statement by Douglas Hurd in *Hansard*, vol.177, 'The Gulf: second day debate', 7 September 1990, column 901.

[89] Statement by Mrs. Thatcher in *Hansard*, vol.177, 'The Gulf', 6 September 1990, op.cit., column 737.

[90] Keohane, op.cit., p.159.

[91] Restrictions on trade with Iraq introduced since 2 August 1990 at agreed international forums

- 6 August – United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 661 was adopted imposing sanctions against Iraq and Kuwait
- 8 August – Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2340/90 was made preventing trade by the Community as regards Iraq and Kuwait.
- 25 August – UNSCR 665 was adopted authorising the multinational forces' navies to halt shipping in order to inspect and verify cargoes
- 25 September – UNSCR 670 was adopted introducing measures to tighten the air embargo, and detain or deny entry to Iraqi registered ships breaching sanctions.

[92] For further details and all statements by the various representatives to the Security Council see *Security Council Document S/PV.2963*, 29 November 1990.

[93] See statements by Douglas Hurd in *Hansard*, vol.181, 'Middle East', 28 November 1990, column 869.

[94] Statement by Mrs. Thatcher in *Hansard*, vol.177, 'The Gulf', 6 September 1990, op.cit., column 742.

[95] Foss, Christopher F., Cook, N., and Barrie, D., 'Iraq's arsenal: the weapons facing the West', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 18 August 1990, p.230. Also see Lennox, Duncan, 'Chemical warfare: extending the range of destruction', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 25 August 1990, p.267. In this article Lennox reported that the West was concerned that Iraq might use chemical weapons loaded onto Scud variants. In addition, the CIA warned of the possibility of an Iraqi biological weapons threat. This article, also in *Jane's Defence Weekly*, revealed that the CIA believed that there was a Bio-weapons facility at Salman Pak, 30 kilometres south-east of Baghdad. See 'CIA warns of biological weapons threat', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 6 October 1990, p.614.

[96] See Sir Peter Emery's questions and Hurd's answers in *Hansard*, vol.178, 'Middle East', 24 October 1990, columns 340-341.

[97] See *Hansard*, vol.180, 'Debate on the Address', 7 November 1990, column 33.

[98] See Tom King's statement in *The Financial Times*, 28 January 1991.

[99] Quoted from Oakley, Robin, 'Allies will stay says Major', *The Times*, 31 January 1991.

[100] For Tom King's statement see *Hansard*, vol.188, 'The Gulf', 19 March 1991, column 156 and for Lennox-Boyd's statement see *Hansard*, vol.188, 'The Middle East', 28 March 1991, column 1099.

[101] 'The Middle East after the Gulf War', *Foreign Affairs Committee, Third Report, Session 1990-91*, 9 July 1991, p.vii.

[102] See for example, 'The Gulf Crisis', in *Statement of the Defence Estimates, 1991, Command Paper 1559*; 'The Middle East after the Gulf War', *Foreign Affairs Committee, Third Report, Session 1990-91*, 9 July 1991; 'Preliminary lessons of Operation Granby', *Defence Committee, Tenth Report, Session 1990-91*, 17 July 1991; *Statement of the Defence Estimates, 1992, Command Paper 1981*; 'Despatch by Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine', (Joint Commander of Operation Granby), *Second Supplement to the London Gazette, no.52589*, 28 June 1991; and Keohane, op.cit.

103 General Sir Peter de la Billière, 'The Gulf conflict: planning and execution', *The RUSI Journal*, op.cit., p.1.

104 For further details on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait see Freedman, L., and Karsh, E., *The Gulf conflict, 1990-1991: diplomacy and war in the new world order*, op.cit. Also see 'Despatch by Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine', *Second Supplement to the London Gazette*, op.cit., pp.G38-G39.

105 *Personal interview with Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine.*

106 'Despatch by Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine', *Second Supplement to the London Gazette*, op.cit., p.G38.

107 *Personal interview with Group Captain A.P.N. Lambert.*

108 'Preliminary lessons of Operation Granby', *Defence Committee, Tenth Report*, Session 1990-91, 17 July 1991, p.v.

109 Starr, Barbara and Lok, Joris Janssen, 'Operation Desert Shield: the players', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 18 August 1990, p.221.

110 Tom King provides a useful summary of the initial deployments in *Hansard*, vol.177, 'The Gulf' (second day's debate), 7 September 1990, columns 836-845. Also see 'Gaines, Mike, 'RAF Gulf deployments cause UK reshuffles', *Flight International*, 22-28 August 1990, p.8 and 'Tornados go stealthy', *Flight International*, 29 August-4 September 1990, p.7. This article revealed that the Government had approved certain modifications to a batch of Tornado F3 being deployed to Saudi Arabia. The modifications were designed to reduce the radar signature of the aircraft.

111 Keohane, op.cit., p.162.

112 'Despatch by Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine', *Second Supplement to the London Gazette*, op.cit., p.G38.

113 *Security Council Document S/RES/665*, 25 August 1990.

114 As Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine stated, the objective of enforcing sanctions against Iraq depended upon close co-operation of naval forces in the Multi-national Maritime Force, provided mainly by thirteen non-Middle Eastern nations, namely Australia, Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, the UK and the US.

115 *Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1991, Command Paper 1559*, p.12.

116 'Despatch by Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine', *Second Supplement to the London Gazette*, op.cit., p.G39.

117 *Personal interview with Group Captain A.P.N. Lambert.*

118 Statement by Mrs. Thatcher in *Hansard*, vol.177, 6 September, 'The Gulf', op.cit., column 738.

119 Statement by Tom King in *Hansard*, vol.177, 'The Gulf', (second day's debate), 7 September 1990, column 836.

120 'Despatch by Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine', *Second Supplement to the London Gazette*, op.cit., p.G40. Also see statements by Tom King in *Hansard*, vol.178, 'British forces (Gulf)', 23 October 1990, column 97 and 'Gulf crisis', 24 October 1990, column 287. For secondary sources on British deployments see Kemp, Ian, 'UK forces training for offensive', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 10 November 1990, pp.926-927 and 'RAF settles down to desert duties', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 22 September 1990, p.500.

121 'Preliminary lessons of Operation Granby', *Defence Committee, Tenth Report, Session 1990-91*, 17 July 1991, pp.84-85 / Annex B.

122 Statement by William Waldegrave in *Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 1990-91, Third Report, Examination of Witnesses*, 24 October 1990, p.41.

123 *Personal interview with Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine.*

124 Evidence by Lieutenant General Sir Peter de la Billiere, in 'Preliminary lessons of Operation Granby', *Defence Committee, Tenth Report, Session 1990-91, Minutes of Evidence*, 8 May 1991, p15.

125 See details of further troop deployments, provided by Tom King in *Hansard*, vol.181, 'The Gulf (Troop deployments)', 22 November 1990, column 425.

126 Even though the US deployed by far the most in terms of personnel and equipment GCC countries extended an invitation to other States, including Britain, to send their forces. See for example, 'Use of Gulf base widens', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 15 September 1990, p.461. This article refers to Qatar's permission to Britain to station Jaguar aircraft at an air base near Doha in Qatar.

127 Evidence by Lieutenant General Sir Peter de la Billiere, in 'Preliminary lessons of Operation Granby', *Defence Committee, Tenth Report, Session 1990-91, Minutes of Evidence*, 8 May 1991, p.17.

128 Idem.

129 Figures taken from *Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1991, Command Paper 1559,* p.13.

130 Statement by Douglas Hurd in 'Gulf Crisis', *Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 1989-90, Minutes of Evidence,* 16 January 1991, p.59.

131 *Personal interview with Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine.*

132 *Personal interview with Sir Patrick Hine,* idem.

133 *Personal interview with Sir Patrick Hine,* idem.

134 *Personal interview with Sir Patrick Hine,* idem.

135 Information taken from 'Preliminary lessons of Operation Granby', *Defence Committee, Tenth Report, Session 1990-91,* 17 July 1991, pp.84-85 / Annex B. For deployment locations see Appendix 6.

136 'Despatch by Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine', *Second Supplement to the London Gazette,* op.cit., p.G40. He went on to confirm that at the height of the preparation phase there were some 50 vessels loading or on route to the Gulf and that a total of 114 different ships from 20 nations took part in the deployment ultimately accumulating a total of 146 round trips.

137 All figures in this and previous paragraph taken from *Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1991, Command Paper 1559,* p.14.

138 'Preliminary lessons of Operation Granby', *Defence Committee, Tenth Report, Session 1990-91,* 17 July 1991, op.cit., p.viii.

139 See *Hansard*, vol.182, 'Iraq (Talks)', 3 December 1990, column 22.

140 See *Hansard*, vol.182, 'The Gulf', 11 December 1990, column 823.

141 *Hansard*, vol.183, 'The Gulf', 15 January 1991, column 735.

142 Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine himself provides a detailed review of British involvement in the war against Iraq. See for example, 'Despatch by Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine', *Second Supplement to the London Gazette,* op.cit., G41-G46. Also see *Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1991*, pp.17-26.

143 Statement by John Major in *Hansard*, vol.183, 17 January 1991, 'The Gulf', column 979.

144 See *Hansard*, vol.184, 'The Gulf', 21 January 1991, column 26. Targets for attack were categorised in accordance with their strategic importance in the sense that they were supporting the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. These included command and control systems, communications networks, airfields, aircraft, missile sites, and nuclear, biological and chemical sites.

145 Ibid., column 27. Also see statements by Tom King at column 107.

146 Both quotes from *Personal interview with Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine.*

147 See statements by Tom King in *Hansard*, vol.184, 'The Gulf', 31 January 1991, column 1107.

148 Keohane, op.cit., p.166

149 Tom King reveals this in *Hansard*, vol.186, 'The Gulf', 19 February 1991, column 141.

150 Keohane, op.cit. p.,166

151 'Despatch by Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine', *Second Supplement to the London Gazette*, op.cit., G45. Also see Tom King in *Hansard*, vol.186, 25 February 1991, columns 645-650; Prime Minister in *Hansard*, vol.186, 'Engagements', 26 February 1991, column 791, and Tom King in *Hansard*, vol.186, 'The Gulf', 26 February 1991, columns 797-800.

152 Keohane, op.cit., p.167. Also see *Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1991, Command Paper 1559, op.cit.*, pp.24-26.

153 *Security Council Document S/PV.2977, (Part 1)*, 13 February 1991.

154 For Pickering's statement see Ibid., p.43, and for Sir David Hannay's statement see *Security Council Document, S/PV.2977, Part II (Closed)*, op.cit., pp.74-75.

155 See *Security Council Document S/PV.2978*, 3 March 1991. Also see *Security Council Document S/RES/686*, 3 March 1991.

156 See statement by Pickering in Ibid., *S/PV.2978*, p.43.

157 Statement by John Major in *Hansard*, vol.186, 'Prime Minister (Engagements)', 28 February 1991, column 1117.

158 This quote is from 'Observations by the Government on the Third Report of the Foreign Affairs Committee', *Command Paper 1682*, October 1991, p.3.

159 *Personal interview with Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine.*

160 Keohane, op.cit., p.167.

161 'Britain calls for removal of Iraqi missiles', *The Times*, 14 March 1991.

162 *Command Paper 1682*, October 1991, op.cit., p.3. Also see Hurd's statement in *Hansard*, vol.189, 'Mass destruction weapons', 20 April 1991, columns 1072-1073 where Hurd stated 'We are actively supporting the United Nations' secretariat work in setting up a Special Commission to carry through ... resolution [687] ... The first and essential step ... is to ensure that Iraq's potential to employ weapons of mass destruction is destroyed, and that that destruction is verified'.

163 Statement by Douglas Hurd in *Hansard*, vol.194, 'Weapons (Iraq)', 2 July 1991, column 124.

164 *Personal interview with Colonel Terence Taylor* who was one of the 21 inspectors connected with the United Nations Special Commission between 1992-1995. He had also been a chief inspector.

165 *Security Council Document, S/RES/687*, 3 April 1991.

166 Trevan, Tim, 'Ongoing monitoring and verification in Iraq', *Arms Control Today*, vol.24, no.4, May 1994, p.11.

167 'Report of the Secretary-General', *Security Council Document, S/22614*, 17 May 1991. Also see Secretary-General's report of 18 April 1991, *Security Council Document, S/22508*. This report detailed the structure of the Special Commission and specified that 5 groups would be established – each assigned to a different sector with a small number of experts. The sectors were identified as (a) biological and chemical weapons, (b) ballistic missiles, (c) nuclear weapons, (d) future compliance and (e) operations support

168 *Personal interview with Colonel Terence Taylor.* Also see 'Letter dated 16 May 1991 from the Director-General of the [IAEA] to the Secretary-General', *Security Council Document, S/22615*, 17 May 1991. This document contains information regarding Iraq's declaration to the IAEA as required under SCR 687.

169 *Personal interview with David Kay.* David Kay had been an inspector in Iraq and at the time of interview was the Secretary-General of the Uranium Institute.

170 *Security Council Document, S/PV.2995*, 26 June 1991, p.16.

171 See *Security Council Document, S/23122*, 8 October 1991, p.3.

172 *Personal interview with David Kay.*

173 Numerous articles have been written since 1991 on the question of the Special Commission and IAEA's role in Iraq. Of particular note are the primary sources published by the United Nations' itself on the missions during 1991. See for example, the numerous IAEA reports on the on-site inspections in Iraq contained in *Security Council Documents, S/22788*, 15 July 1991; *S/22837*, 25 July 1991; *S/22986*, 28 August 1991; *S/23112*, 4 October 1991; S/23122, 8 October 1991; 'Report by the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission', *Security Council Document, S/23165*, 25 October 1991; *S/23215*, 14 November 1991; *S/23283*, 12 December 1991.

174 *Personal interview with David Kay.*

175 *Personal interview with Colonel Terence Taylor.* Colonel Taylor had primarily been involved with the biological weapons group within the Special Commission.

176 *Security Council Document, S/RES/707*, 15 August 1991.

177 Statement made by Richardson, UK's Permanent Representative to the UN, during his speech prior to the adoption of SCR 707 in *Security Council Document, S/PV.3004*, 15 August 1991, pp.84-85.

178 *Personal interview with David Kay.*

179 See *Hansard*, vol.194, 'Weapons (Iraq)', 2 July 1991, column 124, *Hansard*, vol.196, 'Iraq', 15 October 1991, column 135, and in particular *Hansard*, vol.196, 'Iraq (UN inspection team)', 17 October 1991, column 204. As this particular statement highlights, during the UNSCOM missions conducted in 1991, the British Government provided equipment and assistance ranging from vehicles, chemical agent monitors, individual protective equipment, sampling kits, RAF transport, Standby Assay Kits, CBDE Porton Down analysed samples, assistance with cataloguing and translating documents, a gas chromartograph, and infra-red spectrometer, fume cupboards and generators.

180 *Personal interview with Colonel Terence Taylor.*

181 Both quotes from Secretary-General's 'Plan for future ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq's compliance with relevant parts of Section C of [SCR] 687 (1991), *Security Council Document, S/22871*, 1 August 1991, pp.2-6.

182 'British Aerospace industry confronts shifting markets', *Interavia Aerospace Review*, August 1990, pp.664-669.

183 'Iraqi options', *Flight International*, 15-21 August 1990, p.24.

184 Cook, Nick, 'Counting the Gulf dividend', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 25 August 1990, p.294.

185 Fletcher, Martin, 'Pentagon's arms deal may upset BAe sale', *The Times*, 18 September 1990.

186 See Fletcher, Martin, 'Rethink on Saudi weapons package', *The Times*, 21 September 1990, and Fletcher, Martin, 'Bush plans $3.6 bn arms deal', *The Times*, 28 September 1990. The revised package was designed to meet an urgent requirement in view of the Gulf crisis and contained 150 M1A2 tanks, 200 Bradley fighting vehicles, 207 MII3 APCs, 12 Apache attack helicopters, 384 Patriot surface-to-air missiles, 1,1750 TOW anti-tank missiles and large quantities of ammunition and support equipment.

187 Cook, Nick, 'A piece of the action', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 6 October 1990.

188 Robinson, Philip, 'UK nears £10 bn arms deal', *The Times*, 25 October 1991 and Robinson, Philip, 'BAe tops list for planned Saudi orders', *The Times*, 25 October 1991. Also see White, David, 'BAe poised for deal with Saudis', *The Financial Times*, 6 April 1992.

189 Hartung, William D., 'Welcome to the US arms superstore', *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol.49, no.7, September 1993, pp.20-25. Also see 'UK wins £4 bn defence deal:

Saudi contract secures 19,000 jobs in one of largest export orders won by Britain', *The Financial Times*, 29 January 1993.

190 Ibid., p.25. Also see Weaver, Patrick, 'The Major coup for BAe', *The Sunday Telegraph*, 31 January 1993 and Gribben, Roland, 'Desert diplomacy wins the day for BAe negotiator', *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 January 1993.

191 See Evans, Michael, 'Tanks duel in desert for £4 bn orders', *The Times*, 2 October 1991; 'Kuwaitis accused of giving in to Americans over tank deal', *The Times*, 13 October 1992 and 'Defence industry reeling over lost Kuwaiti tank order', *The Times*, 13 October 1992.

192 White, David, 'Vickers set to win order for 250 tanks', *The Financial Times*, 1 December 1993. For more details on the Omani tank deal see White, David, 'World trade news: Oman tank deal may be worth £150m', *The Financial Times*, 29 January 1993.

193 Done, Kevin and Green, Daniel, 'GKN defence contract will secure 500 jobs', *The Financial Times*, 10 August 1993.

194 See Barrow, Martin, 'Omani deal vital for Vosper', *The Times*, 21 November 1991; 'Shipyards boost', *The Times*, 2 September 1991.

## Conclusion

Constructivists such as Albert Yee have stated that 'the inability of ... neorealism ... ultimately to skirt the cognitive complexity of decision making by utilising some form of rationality assumption has led many analysts of international relations to rediscover the importance of ideas and beliefs in policy making'.[1] Others such as Ted Hopf have adopted the notion of "power" as a lens and distinguished between neorealism and neoliberalism which regard material power as the 'single most important source of influence ... in global politics' and constructivism's emphasis on discursive power which he defines as the 'power of knowledge, ideas, culture, and language'.[2] It is in this light that this thesis has sought to carry out a constructivist assessment of the extent to which economic factors influenced British foreign policy towards the GCC States during the period 1979-1991, referred to in the thesis as the "Thatcher era".[3]

The importance that the constructivist approach places on the role of discursive power therefore formed a basis for the hypothesis established in chapter 1 which took as its starting foundation the notion that "Thatcherism" was a belief system dominated by ideas of economics, incentives and interests, which in turn were based on materialism. Consequently, this thesis has attempted to show the extent to which the discourse of the era was itself dominated by Thatcherite ideas and it is in this context that the statement of hypothesis claimed that the central elements of Thatcherism, based upon an image of economic interests, created a framework for approaching foreign policy, and that the nature of British foreign policy towards the GCC States during the Thatcher era was constructed by the positivist discourse of economic interests.

Chapter 1 also discussed the reasons behind the adoption of constructivism as a basis for the analysis by comparing its core assumptions with rationalist theories such as neo-realism. The de-socialised view of rationalist theories which regard interests, identities and material structures as exogenous and given irrespective of time and space was criticised on the grounds that constructivism views international relations to be socially constructed through the interplay of ideational as well as material structures. It argues that reality is socially constructed by identity, a system of meanings, the assumptions of the actors themselves, and indeed by the analyst's linguistic interpretation

of social phenomena. Constructivism, therefore, places great importance on ideational structures and argues that systems of shared ideas, values and beliefs can have structural characteristics, which can exert a powerful influence on social and political action. Viewing Thatcherism as a belief system based upon economic imagery therefore relates closely to the ideational basis of constructivist thought.

Material structures are not dismissed by constructivists, however, since they argue that they do play a role in shaping behaviour, alongside ideational structures, but from a constructivist standpoint it remains the system of meaning which defines how actors interpret their material environment. For constructivists, therefore, individuals are social beings whose interactions involve subjectivity and interpretations, where meaning is created through the process of human understanding of the material world. It is in this context, therefore, that the hypothesis refers to the connection between the structural characteristics of Thatcherism as a system of ideas and values based upon material economic interests and a foreign policy constructed by the positivist discourse of economic interests based upon materialism.

The questions which emerge, therefore, are how prominent economic factors were in the discourse of the Thatcher era and what role these perceived economic interests played in the context of British foreign policy towards the GCC States? Is it possible to argue that Britain had objective definable material interests in the GCC States or are other non-material factors equally or more important when attempting to explain policy? In order to address this issue the case study has suggested the possibility that economic interests did indeed dominate the discourse as it related to the GCC States.

Linked to this issue is the constitutive question of how the British government constructed its economic interests in the GCC States. An analysis of government discourse in chapter 2 highlighted that Britain's continuing reliance on GCC crude oil led to the construction by the Conservatives of the view that the Persian Gulf region was of significant geo-strategic importance which the government could ill afford to ignore. The chapter also highlighted that this view may have been reinforced by the government's perception of the GCC States as markets to which British products could be exported in order to provide one means of alleviating problems brought on by economic recession. Furthermore, an analysis of the discourse has shown that significant elements within the

government believed that recessionary trends were damaging Britain's manufacturing base, and therefore there was a perception that Britain had to export more to counteract some of the effects of the decline.

The discourse also showed that elements within the government believed that one area of manufacturing industry in particular provided an opportunity to demonstrate its seriousness with regard to reversing Britain's economic decline. The subsequent emphasis on defence exports would seem to confirm that the Government believed, although there had been an absolute decline in British manufacturing capabilities, that the defence industry had proved to be much more resilient. Increasing the sale of defence equipment to overseas customers did appear to pay dividends, and arguments such as supporting employment, significant contributions to the balance of payments and large economies of scale were used to justify the Government's desire to take advantage of these possibilities.

An analysis of the Government's defence procurement policies further supported the premise that defence exports featured increasingly in the Government's export drive. Since defence expenditure was accounting for an ever-increasing proportion of the defence budget the early 1980s saw a major attempt to secure better value for money when procuring defence equipment for the armed forces. The government believed prospective equipment needed to be made more saleable abroad, thereby assisting the defence industry to be less reliant on the MOD for its market and profits. Explicit statements by numerous key politicians such as Douglas Hurd (as Minister of State for the FCO) and Michael Heseltine (when he was Defence Secretary) seem to confirm the government's support for the export of defence equipment. It is in this light, therefore, that the role played by certain factors in assisting the development of defence exports appears to gain importance.

Chapter 2 used the points raised above (amongst others) to demonstrate how the government constructed its position on both the importance of the GCC States and on the question of exporting in order to alleviate some of effects of the recession. Further analysis of the construction of British interests in the GCC was then based upon a consideration of these markets themselves, and British exports to Oman, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were examined. One perception was that numerous events at the start of the 1980s had contributed to raising levels of instability in the Persian Gulf region, and this

may have contributed to the GCC States giving increasing priority to their own defence capabilities. In light of Government statements which supported not only the formation of the GCC, but also actively confirmed that stability in the region was a major British concern, it is understandable therefore that the British Government sought to export defence equipment to these states. In addition to securing numerous defence-related contracts in Oman and Kuwait, civilian industries such as construction, electronics and mining (to name but a few) were also actively involved.

Saudi Arabia, in particular, featured prominently in the discourse and could be seen as a crucial market since its defence purchases were based upon a multiple sources policy. Although the Kingdom had traditionally been heavily reliant on the US for the bulk of its defence needs, certain political considerations, highlighted in the chapter, may have contributed to its becoming increasingly disillusioned with that relationship. Since there was the intense competition between Western suppliers for arms sales, issues such as the perceived tensions in US-Saudi relations meant that other smaller suppliers such as Britain could capitalise and secure sizeable contracts for themselves. Indeed, contracts such as *Al Yamamah* demonstrated how high the stakes could be with early estimates of £5bn going up to £10bn, prompting the belief that British-Saudi defence relations would be sealed well into the next century.

The analysis of the relevance of economic factors within Thatcherite discourse continued into chapter 3, which considered the period between 1988 and July 1990. As the chapter highlighted, the Gulf region continued to feature in the discourse as the Government and various defence companies such as British Aerospace continued in their search for lucrative contracts. The strengthening of the close contacts between Britain and the GCC States reinforced the belief that these States were natural markets for British products and that it was therefore seen as necessary to continue to build upon the success achieved earlier in the 1980s. Various individuals such as Tim Sainsbury claimed that the Thatcher government continued to place a high degree of importance on the success of Britain's defence exports and that therefore the securing of important contracts such as phase 2 of *Al Yamamah* was being actively encouraged.

Indeed, even though, in light of reduced East-West tension, there was an opportunity to reallocate resources previously earmarked for defence to civilian purposes,

elements in the discourse suggested that the government was resisting this, particularly given its past successes in the field of defence sales. For instance, as the chapter showed, various politicians such as Alan Clark regarded it as absurd that the most successful parts of British industry should be forced to desist from what they did best. The impression created by the discourse was that the government continued to encourage the export of defence equipment with direct help continuing to be provided by DESO, alongside the establishment of defence fairs in potential customer areas such as the GCC States through the utilisation of Service Attachés and the use of companies such as IMS, the commercial arm of the Ministry of Defence.

Another impression created by the discourse related to the position of Saudi Arabia as a significant market. The Saudi decision to purchase the Black Hawk helicopter from Westland, for instance, although it did not alleviate Westland's long term problems, suggested that markets such as those of the GCC States were of some importance. In addition, though not on the same scale as British exports to Saudi Arabia, trade with the other GCC States was not insignificant. Oman in particular appeared to be a prominent feature in British defence plans for the region. Not only did Britain continue to provide the Sultanate with defence equipment, but also, since high-ranking British officers were prominently located in the state's armed forces, the links between the two countries even became part of Oman's national defence strategy. This issue receives further attention in due course.

Although chapter 4 was mainly concerned with an analysis of the political, diplomatic and military contribution made by Britain to solving the Gulf Crisis brought on by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, a section of the chapter was nevertheless devoted to a brief summary of Britain's economic links with the key GCC States. This section showed that exports continued to feature in the discourse, and that the GCC States were still perceived as markets. There was also a possibility that the Gulf War was seen as providing an opportunity to further British defence sales to the region.

This then represents a brief summary of some of the key economic issues featured in the discourse of the era and reported in the case study. It shows how the government constructed its interests in the GCC states and the portrayal of Thatcherism as a belief system based upon material economic interests demonstrates the emphasis placed on

ideational structures by constructivist thought. In addition to this, constructivism's acceptance of the significance of material structures as factors which, together with ideational structures, influence foreign policy decisions explains the relevance of identifying the GCC States as natural markets for British exports. Adopting the constructivist approach, therefore, has enabled the case study to demonstrate that foreign policy decisions are the product of a lengthy intersubjective process involving the prominence of ideas and the creation of identities. This endogenous characteristic of foreign policy making whereby actors enter into dynamic social relationships stands in clear contrast to the portrayal by mainstream theories such as neo-realism of interests and identities as being fixed and given irrespective of time and space, since the constructivist approach adopted by this thesis has shown that identities are far from fixed. Both Lord Douglas Hurd and Sir Alan Munro, for instance, talked of a shift in policy towards the Gulf region with the arrival of the Thatcher Administration in 1979 whereby the GCC States were accorded greater importance than previously, and the strengthening of the identities of these states as important markets for Britain reinforces the constructivist connection between identities and interests. The question now is whether, in light of the analysis, it is possible to endorse the view that British foreign policy towards the GCC States was indeed constructed, as the hypothesis states, by objective definable economic interests. On the surface economic emphasis and imagery appears to dominate the discourse and in light of this it is possible to offer validity to the statement of hypothesis that Thatcherism did indeed create a framework for foreign policy and that British foreign policy towards the GCC States was shaped by the positivist discourse of economic interests.

Having said this, however, two further questions emerge. Firstly, does the analyst have a role in the construction of conclusions and if so, what is this role? Secondly, does constructivism as an approach allow for the identification of alternative explanations? Chapter 1 highlighted the distinctions between rationalist theories such as neo-realism and neo-liberal institutionalism and interpretive approaches such as post-modernism and critical theory. The chapter also showed that the earlier debates between the rationalists and critical theorists revolved around an interpretive challenge of the methodological, epistemological and ontological foundations of rationalist theories and a rationalist

accusation that interpretive theories were unable to say anything about "real world" international relations.

Constructivism remains part of a family of theories, including post-modernism and critical theory, which have rejected attempts at hegemonic empirically verifiable truth statements. In light of this can it be argued that to say the case study has "proved" that objective and verifiable economic interests were responsible for the formation of British foreign policy towards the GCC States is just such a truth statement and therefore the product of an empirically based process of validation and falsification? Can it be argued that the case study has revealed the underlying "reality" of the nature of British foreign policy towards these Gulf States? What is of particular relevance here is constructivism's ability to span positivist and post-positivist frameworks and thus lay claim to the so-called "middle ground" between rationalist and interpretive approaches (see chapter 1 section 1).

It is this occupation of the middle ground which has enabled constructivism to push purely reflective approaches such as early critical theory away from meta-theoretical critique to an empirical analysis of world politics while simultaneously challenging the rationalist and positivist view that by adopting the scientific method it is possible to conclude that objective and empirically verifiable truth statements do exist. It is in this light, therefore, that the contribution of constructivism to this thesis needs to be viewed. Having its roots in critical theory provide it with reflective and interpretive credentials, while its emphasis on analysing core issues in international relations has meant that constructivism has indeed "emerged as a significant force in empirical research".[4]

Whereas positivist theories seek to explain reality by emphasising empiricist observation, where the analyst is able to detach him/herself from the analytical process, post-positivism appears more concerned with "understanding" and the analyst is assumed to be part of the process. Can the analyst throw any light on what Thatcherite discourse has revealed? The case study has been based upon an extensive range of relevant research material which has formed the basis of the discourse. The analysis of the complete Official Record (1979-1992), extensive examination of Select Committee Reports and United Nations documents, interviews with numerous officials, and a detailed

investigation of relevant press files and other secondary sources can perhaps be deemed to be a significant body of literature from which to draw the conclusion that economic interests did indeed shape British foreign policy towards the GCC States. However, although this discourse has been dominated by economic factors, the analyst has been able to identify alternative explanations which have also formed part of the language of the era. It therefore becomes possible to dispute elements of the statement of hypothesis, and also apparent that to claim that economic interests could have shaped British foreign policy towards the GCC States exclusively would be insufficient. Indeed, though they do not appear to feature as prominently within the discourse, numerous factors which seek to provide alternative explanations for policy have been identified.

In view of the importance placed upon discourse by the constructivist approach any conclusions that the analyst draws must stem from the language of the era itself, and therefore a deconstruction of the research material would inevitably reveal the existence of alternative explanations, thereby demonstrating that this observation is in line with post-positivist emphasis on the plurality of world views. What, therefore, are the alternative factors this analysis has revealed? What significance is attached, for example, to Mrs. Thatcher's desire to play a "warrior role" and enable Britain to demonstrate it still had a part to play at the international level? Another factor worthy of attention, as highlighted by David Nicholls' comments and numerous elements within the Official Record and Select Committee Reports, was the possibility of a British interest in the revived United Nations. In light of the increasing levels of co-operation with the Soviet Union the British Government may well have come to the conclusion that it could play a more prominent role in the international system.

Furthermore, Britain's historical connection with the Gulf States through agreements such as the Treaties of Friendship could also have been elements influencing British foreign policy (see Appendix 1). For instance, Britain's connection with Oman was strengthened by the fact that Britain had had loan service personnel actually integrated into the Omani armed forces well before the arrival of the Thatcher Administration, as well as during the period of the case study, and this would seem indicate the importance of historical connections. Geo-strategic factors such as threats to the vast oil reserves of the region may also have featured in British foreign policy and, as

the case study has demonstrated, British threat perceptions during the period in question were seen to be based upon the ongoing war between Iran and Iraq, the emergence of a fundamentally hostile regime in Iran in 1979 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, since they were all factors which had the potential to endanger the general stability of the region.

Finally, it has also been claimed that following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait Britain remained mindful of the so-called special relationship with the US and sought to enhance it. Mrs. Thatcher's earlier support for the US decision to establish a rapid deployment force by agreeing to lease the islands of Diego Garcia to the Americans can perhaps also be seen in this context rather than claiming that it was because Britain wanted to safeguard its economic interests. Other factors such as concern over Iraq's proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the maintenance of a military presence in the region in the form of the Armilla Patrol and the sizeable military contribution to the US led coalition forces massed against Iraq in 1991 may show that the British government was indeed concerned about the stability of the geo-strategically important Persian Gulf region, but the central question is whether these factors in themselves prove that Britain's concern was due to its economic interests in the GCC States.

Beyond its emphasis on discourse the constructivist approach has been invaluable due to factors such as its position on ideas. Constructivism is clearly ideational in the sense that constructivists argue that ideas can influence the behaviour of units, just as neo-realists argue that structural anarchy constrains the behaviour of states in the international system. This central proposition has, therefore, been instrumental in aiding both the establishment of the hypothesis and in testing it. Constructivism, however, is able to go beyond theories such as neo-realism in its acceptance of the premise that material structures also play a role. This crucial difference has allowed the analyst here to reflect on both the ideational influence of Thatcherism and the question of British material interests. Ideational power may have been distinguished from material power, but the hypothesis, in accordance with the central proposition of the constructivist approach, has not ignored material issues.

Two final questions remain, namely how useful has the constructivist approach been in helping to shape conclusions and what role does the analyst have in drawing

these conclusions. Beyond its emphasis on discourse the constructivist approach has been invaluable due to factors such as its position on ideas. Constructivism is clearly ideational in the sense that constructivists argue that ideas can influence the behaviour of units, just as neo-realists argue that structural anarchy constrains the behaviour of states in the international system. This central proposition has, therefore, been instrumental in aiding both the establishment of the hypothesis and in testing it. Constructivism, however, is able to go beyond theories such as neo-realism in its acceptance of the premise that material structures also play a role. This crucial difference has allowed the analyst here to reflect on both the ideational influence of Thatcherism and the question of British material interests. Ideational power may have been distinguished from material power, but the hypothesis, in accordance with the central proposition of the constructivist approach, has not ignored material issues. Constructivism's emphasis on discourse and ideas remains valid in that the conclusions drawn here are inherent within the language of the era. An analysis of that language has revealed that economic factors dominated Thatcherite discourse but at the same time a further deconstruction would reveal the existence of a plurality of explanations. Positivist theories such as neo-realism would not be able to yield satisfactory results given their rigid empiricist foundations based upon the observation, falsification and verification of the scientific method and claims that there is an objective truth. Constructivism's positivist and post-positivist credentials allow empirical analysis while at the same time enabling the analyst to reflect on the conclusions drawn.

Finally the analyst's opinions cannot be ignored given post-positivist emphasis on reflection and the close connection between the so-called observer and the observed. In light of this the analyst concludes that this thesis has been as much about the impressions gained from the discourse as it has been about determining the extent of economic influence on Thatcherite policy towards the GCC States. The linguistic element of the discourse has not only taken on added importance but has revealed a most important observation, namely, the high level of economic imagery prevalent in the discourse. On this basis Thatcherism has to be considered in terms of the ideational construct of Britain's economic and global decline and with this belief system propounding a vision of a challenging external environment arising from the new problems of the 1980s, it is

understandable that Britain reconsidered its foreign policy options and ultimately played a prominent role in the region. In view of the perceived strategic and economic importance of the region combined with the perceptions of threats the Government could not, therefore, if it was to remain consistent with the ideational construct of Thatcherism, have considered any options but to safeguard its interests in the GCC States. Having said this, however, the analyst has found it difficult to claim unqualified support for the hypothesis given that though the case study may have shown that material interests were prominent in the discourse, they were still only one element in a host of contributory factors which may have influenced the formation of policy. Therefore, to state that economics shaped British foreign policy towards the GCC States exclusively would be short-sighted.

## Notes

1 Yee, op.cit., p.69.

2 Hopf, op.cit., p.177.

3 The entire period of study has been referred to as the "Thatcher era" even though Mrs. Thatcher had been removed from office prior to the end of the analytical period.

4 See chapter 1, endnote 60.

**Appendix 1: Defence treaties and other links with the GCC States**

**Qatar:** Treaty of Friendship, allowing for close consultation in time of need, signed in 1971 and renewed in 1981. No specific military commitments – but British officers were on loan in an advisory capacity

**Saudi Arabia:** No formal defence commitments but defence relations were extremely close. Saudi Arabia was the UK's largest defence sales market and there was a high degree of military assistance in the form of student training and British military personnel were on loan in an advisory capacity.

**UAE:** Limited but friendly defence relations. Treaty of Friendship signed in 1971, renewed in 1981. Loan Service personnel based in Dubai.

**Bahrain:** Treaty of Friendship signed in 1971, renewed in 1981. Close military consultation though no specific military commitments.

**Kuwait:** Friendly defence relations but no commitments to provide direct military support. The 1961 Military Assistance Agreement was abrogated in 1968. However, the Kuwait Liaison Team, which was set up in 1964 and manned by seconded British military personnel continued its role of training indigenous armed forces.

**Oman:** Long standing and close defence relations, which include more extensive co-operation than any other GCC State. Loan Service personnel filled key appointments in the Sultan's Armed Forces.

[Source: 'UK/Gulf States Defence Agreements', *Memorandum from the FCO to the Foreign Affairs Committee*, 10 February 1988]

**Appendix 2:** United Nations Security Council Resolutions: adopted in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait – Source: *Hansard*, vol.177.

| Resolution | Brief Description |
|---|---|
| 661 – 2 August 1990 | Condemned the invasion and called for immediate and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait |
| 661 – 6 August 1990 | Mandatory sanctions imposed on Iraq |
| 662 – 9 August 1990 | Specified that the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait was illegal and therefore null and void. |
| 664 – 18 August 1990 | Reaffirmed the rights of third state nationals and their rights to leave |
| 665 – 25 August 1990 | Authorised measures to halt shipping in order to inspect and verify cargoes |
| 666 – 13 September 1990 | Established a system to permit food imports to Iraq and Kuwait in humanitarian circumstances |
| 667 – 16 September 1990 | Condemned Iraqi attacks against diplomatic premises |
| 669 – 24 September 1990 | Called on the Sanctions Committee to consider requests for economic assistance under article 50 of the UN Charter |
| 670 – 25 September 1990 | Measures to tighten air embargo and detain or deny entry to Iraqi – registered ships breaching sanctions |

**Appendix 3**

S/RES/678 (1990)
29 November 1990

RESOLUTION 678 (1990) - Adopted by the Security Council at its 2963rd meeting on 29 November 1990

The Security Council,

Recalling, and reaffirming its resolutions 660 (1990) of 2 August (1990), 661 (1990) of 6 August 1990, 662 (1990) of 9 August 1990, 664 (1990) of 18 August 1990, 665 (1990) of 25 August 1990, 666 (1990) of 13 September 1990, 667 (1990) of 16 September 1990, 669 (1990) of 24 September 1990, 670 (1990) of 25 September 1990, 674 (1990) of 29 October 1990 and 677 (1990) of 28 November 1990.

Noting that, despite all efforts by the United Nations, Iraq refuses to comply with its obligation to implement resolution 660 (1990) and the above-mentioned subsequent relevant resolutions, in flagrant contempt of the Security Council,

Mindful of its duties and responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance and preservation of international peace and security,

Determined to secure full compliance with its decisions,

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter,

1. Demands that Iraq comply fully with resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions, and decides, while maintaining all its decisions, to allow Iraq one final opportunity, as a pause of goodwill, to do so;

2. Authorizes Member States co-operating with the Government of Kuwait, unless Iraq on or before 15 January 1991 fully implements, as set forth in paragraph 1 above, the foregoing resolutions, to use all necessary means to uphold and implement resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area;

3. Requests all States to provide appropriate support for the actions undertaken in pursuance of paragraph 2 of the present resolution;

4. Requests the States concerned to keep the Security Council regularly informed on the progress of actions undertaken pursuant to paragraphs 2 and 3 of the present resolution;

Decides to remain seized of the matter.

**Appendix 4**: Relevant parts of Section C of Security Council Resolution 687 adopted in 3 April 1991

The Security Council ....

7. Invites Iraq to reaffirm unconditionally its obligation under the Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925, and to ratify the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on the Their Destruction, of 10 April 1972;

8. Decides that Iraq shall unconditionally accept the destruction, removal, or rendering harmless under international supervision, of:

(a) All chemical and biological weapons and all stockpiles of agents and all related subsystems and components and all research, development, support and manufacturing facilities;

(b) All ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometres and related major parts, and repair and production facilities;

7. Decides, for the implementation of paragraph 8 above, the following:

...

9.

(i) The forming if a Special Commission, which shall carry out immediate on-site inspection of Iraq's biological, chemical and missile capabilities, based on Iraq's declarations and the designation of any additional locations by the Special Commission itself;

...

10. Decides that Iraq shall unconditionally undertake not to use, develop, construct or acquire any of the items specified in paragraphs 8 and 9 above and requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Special Commission, to develop a plan for the future ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq's compliance with this paragraph ...

11. Invites Iraq to reaffirm unconditionally its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 1 July 1968;

12. Decides that Iraq shall unconditionally agree not to acquire or develop nuclear weapons or nuclear-weapons-usable material or any subsystems or components or any research, development, support or manufacturing facilities related to the above; to submit to the Secretary-General and the Director-General of the [IAEA] within fifteen days of the adoption of the present resolution a declaration of the locations, amounts, and types of all items specified above; to place all of its nuclear-weapons-usable-

materials under the exclusive control, for custody and removal, of the [IAEA], with the assistance and co-operation of the Special Commission as provided for in the plan of the Secretary-General ... to accept urgent on-site inspection and destruction, removal or rendering harmless as appropriate of all items specified above; and to accept the plan ... for the future ongoing monitoring and verification of its compliance with these undertakings;

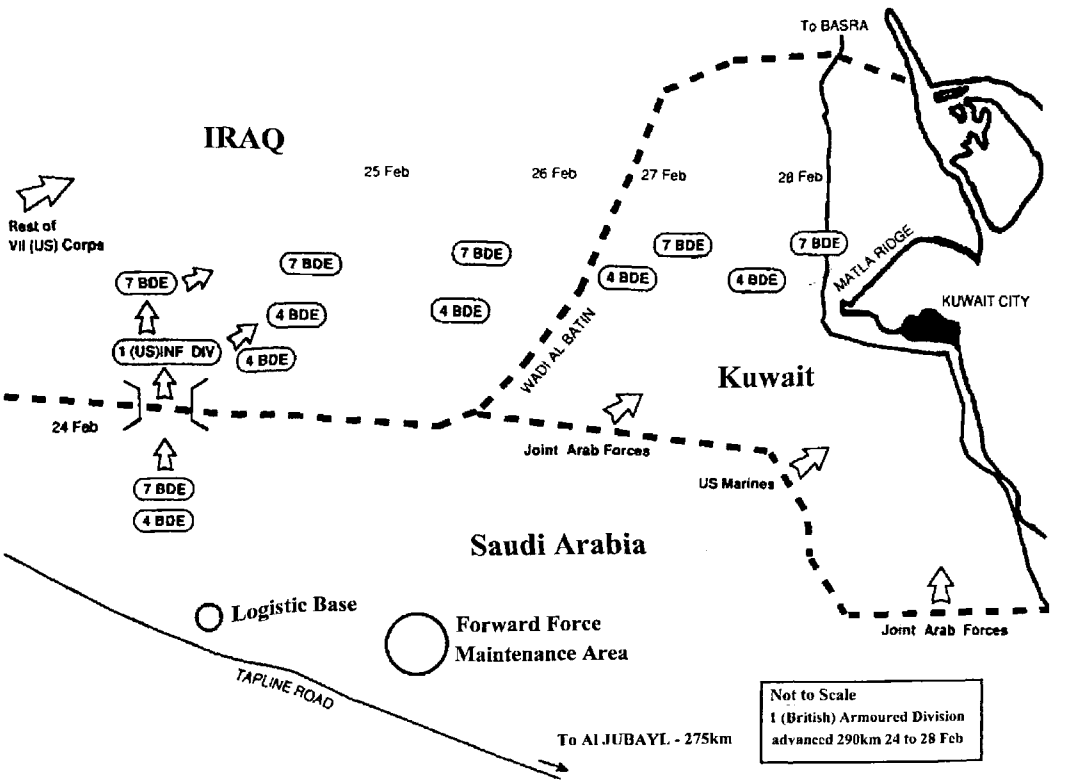
13. Requests the Director-General of the [IAEA], through the Secretary-General, with the assistance and co-operation of the Special Commission as provided for in the plan of the Secretary-General ... to carry out immediate on-site inspection of Iraq's nuclear capabilities based on Iraq's declarations and the designation of any additional locations by the Special Commission; to develop a plan ... calling for the destruction, removal, or rendering harmless as appropriate for all items listed in paragraph 12 above; to carry out the plan within forty-five days following approval by the Security Council; and to develop a plan, taking into account the rights and obligations of Iraq under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 1 July 1968, for the future ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq's compliance with paragraph 12 above, including an inventory of all nuclear material in Iraq subject to the Agency's verification and inspections to confirm that Agency safeguards cover all relevant nuclear activities in Iraq ...

## Appendix 5: Map of Persian Gulf Region


### Key

1 – Jordan 2 – Israel 3 – Lebanon 4 – Kuwait 5 – Qatar
6 – Bahrain 7 – Muharraq 8 – Red Sea 9 – UAE

## Appendix 6 – Progress of 1st (British) Armoured Division towards Kuwait City



**Appendix 7**
**Special Commission rights under Resolution 715, adopted on 11 October 1991.**

- To designated for inspection any site, facility, activity, material or other items in Iraq;
- To inspect, at any time ... any site or facility declared by Iraq or designated by the Special Commission;
- To inspect, at any time ... any activity, material, or other item at any site or facility, including any material or other item in movement;
- To inspect any number of declared or designated sites or facilities simultaneously or sequentially
- To designate for aerial overflight any area, location, site or facility in Iraq;
- To carry out, at any time ... aerial overflight ... of any area, location, site or facility designated by the Special Commission;
- To carry out, at any time ... all such other flights ... as it deems necessary.

[Source: *Security Council Document, S/22871*, 1 August 1991]

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**David Alan Nicholls** — Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence, 1977-80; Assistant Sec., Gen. for Defence Planning and Policy, NATO, 1980-1984; Deputy Under-Secretary of State (Policy), Ministry of Defence, 1984-1989.

**Group Captain A.P.N. Lambert** — Director of Defence Studies, Royal Air Force Staff College, Bracknell, Berkshire.

**Sir Colin Chandler** — Head of Defence Sales, Ministry of Defence, 1985-1989.

**Sir Frank Cooper** — Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence, 1976-1982.

**Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine** — Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, United Kingdom Air Forces, 1988-1991. Military advisor to British Aerospace since 1992.

**Stephen Day** — HM Ambassador to Qatar, 1981-1984; Head of the Middle East Department, FCO, 1984-1986

**Lord Douglas Hurd** — Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs during the first Thatcher Administration and Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs during the Gulf War against Iraq

**Sir Alan Munro** — Head of the Middle East Department, FCO, 1979, spanning the change of Administration from Labour to Conservative Government in 1979. Also Regional Marketing Director (Middle East), Ministry of Defence, 1981-1983.

**Sir Derek Boorman** — Concerned with the Director of Military Operations, 1980-1982, Chief of Defence Intelligence and Deputy Chairman of the JIC, 1985-1988.

**Colonel Terence Taylor** At time of interviewing Colonel Terence Taylor was the Assistant Director of the International Institute of Strategic Studies. He was one of the military officers directly involved in policy development during the Gulf War in relation to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)–and the arms control dimensions of it. He was also a member of the Defence Arms Control Unit in the Ministry of Defence, and from 1992-1995, he was one of the 21 Commissioners on the UN Special Commission (UNSC).

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**5. House of Commons Official Report, *Hansard*.**

One invaluable source of Primary material for the whole time period covered by the thesis has been the Official Report of the House Commons Parliamentary Debates,

known as *Hansard*. Over 200 volumes have been examined in total beginning the final volumes of the 5th Series and ending with volume 200 in the 6th Series, dated December 2 - December 13, 1991-1992.

There are many references to this source in the thesis and the volumes used are always referred to as *Hansard* in the endnotes, with the Title of the Statement or Debate, volume number, date and column number being noted.

Each volume of *Hansard* is divided into 3 sections, namely, the Debates on specific Government issues, Oral Answers such as Prime Minister's question time, and Written Answers. In order to gather relevant material for the thesis, an extensive list of some 70 key words was compiled, and these were then searched for in the index to each volume, so that the necessary material could be extracted.

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